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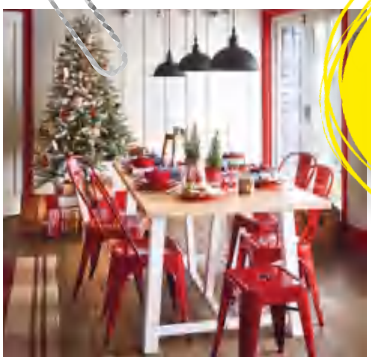

Styling & decorating advice for every room

Adorable festive craft projects you will love

Recipes for family feasts and quick cook's cheats

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- Create a country kitchen
- Know your consumer rights
- Fit a curtain track

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- 50 gorgeous gift ideas – all under £50
- Get your home ready for guests to stay
- Give your bathroom the spa treatment
- Warm & welcoming real homes to inspire you

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Get the look...

There's nothing quite like neutrals to bring a sense of calm and balance to your room. From the freshest whites to delicate dove greys, neutral shades allow the natural beauty of your room to really shine through. To get the look, layer blinds and curtains in natural shades for a cosy feel, and introduce co-ordinating cushions for added texture and warmth.

Book a free in-home appointment today and discover how Hillarys can help you transform your windows this winter.

HILLARYS

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Transform your living room with the gorgeous, vintage inspired Copenhagen range.
A quality sofa that'll add a touch of class to any living space. **harveysfurniture.co.uk**

Copenhagen Sofa in leather from **£999**, fabric from **£899**, shown with the Quintrell Large Sideboard in black from **£799** and Titan Coffee Table from **£449.**

Bay Leather Republic
COLLECTION

Harveys

Photo Lizzie Orme

Welcome

Can you believe it's Christmas time already? Where on earth has this year gone? But don't panic, we've got all you need in this issue to make sure your festive celebrations go smoothly. We've been scouring the high street and internet to find the most **brilliant gift ideas** for your family and friends (p.40) and they're **all under £50** – because let's face it, we're all on a budget this year aren't we? We've also got some **gorgeous decorating ideas and styling tips** that are quick and easy to achieve and will **make your home look really magical** (p.36).

If you love entertaining at Christmas, turn to page 100 where we've got some **new twists to try on the traditional festive fare** (take it from me, the maple roasted potatoes are divine!). But if you'd rather not spend time slaving over a hot stove during the festive season, we've also picked **the best fuss-free food and drink** from the supermarkets to make feeding family and friends a breeze (p.104).

I know that some of you will be taking the opportunity to **do a spot of decorating** over the holiday season, so we've made sure there's **lots to inspire you** in this issue. From our **opulent room schemes** on page 20, to our **beautiful bedroom makeovers** (p.24), you're sure to find something that makes you want to pick up a paint brush.

However you plan to spend the coming weeks, whether it's celebrating or decorating, I'd like to wish you a merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year from all the *Your Home* team.

Anna-Lisa

Our Craft Editor Sophie has been rustling up some brilliant craft projects to fill your home with magic this Christmas (p.60).

Deputy Editor Lara spoke to the man himself at Cath Kidston's Christmas preview to discover what this year's must-have gifts are. Find out on page 40.

Go digital...

Download our app version for your mobile, tablet or PC and you can take *Your Home* with you on the go. See page 86.

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Have you **missed an issue**?
Call 01206 851117 to order back copies

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Inside this tin is fashion for walls.

Chic for kitchens, couture for halls.

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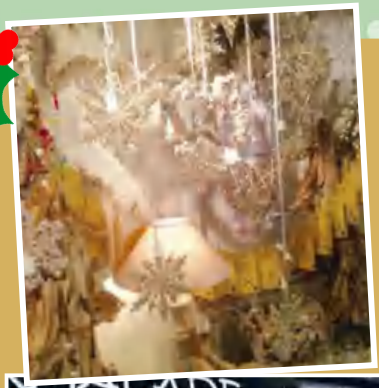
An afternoon well spent

If you're planning your festive get togethers this month, why not treat you and your friends to an Afternoon Tea with a festive twist? From 1st December, Dobbies garden centres will be offering Christmas Afternoon Tea for 2 people for just £20. You'll get to choose from a selection of miniature sandwiches, including smoked salmon & horseradish and brie & grape, along with cinnamon or plain scones and sweet treats such as mini mince pies and Black Forest gateau. You can even upgrade your tea to include a miniature bottle of prosecco for an extra £2.50 per person. Book your table at www.dobbies.com.

This month *we love...*

For stockists see page 121

Make the most of December with the best things to do, see and buy this month



Hidden Gem: *Marmalade Meringue*

One peek at the window displays of this month's hidden gem and you'll be eager to get inside to explore the two floors of gifts, cards and homewares. Opened back in 2011 by mother and daughter team, Trudy and Tilley, Marmalade Meringue has already won lots of awards, including The Greats Best Independent Gift Retailer of the Year 2015 for the Midlands and Wales, and it's clear to see why. The shop even has a dedicated Christmas room throughout the festive season where you can pick up beautiful and unique decorations to get your home looking great. From 29th November up until Christmas Eve the store will be open seven days a week so there's plenty of opportunity to pop in and pick up some gifts. Find Marmalade Meringue at 82 Castle Street, Hinckley, Leicestershire, LE10 1DD.

Make it personal

Oliver Bonas is always a good place to start if you're looking for gorgeous, unusual gifts and now its offering is better than ever thanks to a new personalisation service. Gifts including candles, notebooks and jewellery can all be personalised with names, dates or messages to make your presents extra special for your loved ones. Once you've chosen your gift at www.oliverbonas.com, enter your message in the boxes provided and a preview of your personalised gift will appear on the screen. We love the journals – perfect for travellers and scribblers – and the metallic clip top tassels are perfect to adding a little sparkle to your handbag or keys.

Personalised journal, from £14; **metallic tassel**, £19, both Oliver Bonas

Feature Laura McLeish

Purrfect presents

Treat your furry friends this Christmas with these novelty gifts

No need to worry about the cat scratching your laptop with this cardboard version

Cat playhouse cardboard laptop, £17.95, www.geniegadgets.com

Make meal times extra special with this scoop

Personalised silver plated pet food scoop, £19.50, Not on the High Street

Get a playful pooch into the Christmas spirit

Santa's little helper jumper, from £8, Next

Your pet will be toasty in this stylish scarf

Pet neon Fairisle scarf, £5, Accessorize

Add some bling to their collar with these cute charms

Pet collar charms, £1, Poundland

Baa Humbug

Designer Mary Kilvert is well known for her adorable hand-felted sheep and now the woolly wonders are taking centre-stage on Mary's festive collection of gifts and home accessories. The 'Flock of Sheep in the Snow' design features the jumper-wearing sheep set against a snowy background – just as cute as it sounds! Treat yourself to a mug or tea towel or pick up the greeting cards and wrapping paper to make your Christmas gifts extra special. We love the set of six Christmas crackers that are handmade in Dorset and contain wooden eco-friendly gifts that your guests will actually want to keep once dinner is over.

Christmas crackers, £36 for six; **tea towel**, £12, both Mary Kilvert

Tea treats

For tea lovers that appreciate a great cuppa, Teapigs has launched Tins of Tea that look as good as they taste. Available in 10 of the most popular flavours, including English Breakfast, Earl Grey and Peppermint, you'll get 20 tea temples, all packaged in a stylish tin that will look great on your kitchen counter. They're so pretty that you could give them as presents, or treat any over-night guests to a luxury morning cup of tea if you're feeling generous!

Tins of tea, £10, www.teapigs.co.uk

Light up your Christmas

Our pick of the Christmas events this month is Christmas Glow at the RHS Garden Wisley, Surrey, on Wednesday 2nd December. Not only will the gardens be transformed with the Jigantics light installation of giant illuminated flowers, but The Great British Bake Off's very own Mary Berry has been chosen to switch on the lights this year. The big switch on is at 5pm and visitors can enjoy some late night shopping at the Wisley Christmas Shop until 8.30pm, so there really is something for everyone. If you can't make it on the 2nd December, it's still worth a trip to see the magical display, which is on until 3rd January 2016, with last entry to the gardens at 4pm every day. Entry to the garden costs £12 for adults and £6 for children.

Your letters

We answer your questions and discover what you've been up to this month…

YOUR HOME NEEDS YOU!

We love to hear what you've been up to, so send us your letters, tips and photos and you could win up to £120 of WallpaperDirect vouchers.

Laura x

Editorial Assistant

Cream of the crop

Inspired by a cream kitchen that was featured on the cover of *Your Home* back in May last year, I managed to get hold of the bar stools featured but the rest of the kitchen was out of my price range. So, I got out my paint brush and repainted the tiles and cabinets and I'm so pleased with the results! All I need now is a blind to finish off the look. I'm sure there will be one in my pile of *Your Home* magazines that takes my fancy!
Mrs Coriss, County Durham

Your Home says **It's great to hear that you were so inspired by one of our covers and we're sure a lot of readers will be inspired by what you've achieved in your own kitchen! It goes to show that you don't have to spend a fortune to get a home that looks like a million dollars.**

LETTER OF THE MONTH

I'd been feeling a bit down and stuck in a rut. I went into a newsagent to see if something would spark my interest and bought the September issue of *Your Home*, to be honest, without much hope of it lifting my spirits. How wrong I was! Your magazine has given me a new project in making over my house and that in turn has brightened things up in my life. All for the bargain price of £1.99.
Michelle Merrett, Hampshire

Your Home says **We're happy we could help, Michelle. Sometimes all it takes is a new project to get you out of a rut and get your home looking lovely!**

Michelle's letter won £120 of WallpaperDirect vouchers. Send us your views, thoughts and ideas and you could be next month's winner.

Feature Laura McLeish

Sweet dreams

I have been trying to buy a plain, white base valance for a double bed but can only seem to find the box pleated kind, instead of the gathered or frilled ones that used to be popular. I cannot seem to find one anywhere, so any help would be appreciated.
Dawn Morton, Leeds

Your Home says **Box pleated valances have become really popular in recent years, but we managed to find this gathered one from House of Bath that will fit any size bed and comes in a variety of colours, including white. Hope this helps!**

Universal valance, £19.95, House of Bath

Get online

Tweet us your pictures and comments @your_home or like our Facebook page www.facebook.com/yourhomemag

Setting the benchmark

I thought you might like to see some pictures of my upcycled, shabby chic bench. I was given a single bed but I lost the bolts to fix it together and so this bench was born. My partner constructed the bench and I painted it with chalk paint, distressed it and made the cushions to finish the look. I am really quite proud of the end result and am now busy working on upcycling a double bed.
Kerry Sweeney, via email

Your Home says **We'd be proud too if we'd made this, Kerry. Wooden bed frames are perfect for making a bench as they're really sturdy and don't need much alteration to transform into a great-looking bench. We hope your next project is going just as well.**

SEND YOUR TIPS, PHOTOS AND LETTERS TO:
Letters Editor, Your Home, Hubert Burda Media UK, The Tower, Phoenix Square, Colchester, Essex CO4 9HU or email yourhome@burdamagazines.co.uk

● Letters may have to be edited. We apologise but photos cannot be returned

Our Letter of the Month will win £120 of WallpaperDirect vouchers, plus every letter printed will receive a £20 WallpaperDirect voucher to be spent online. Call 01323 430886 or visit www.wallpaperdirect.com

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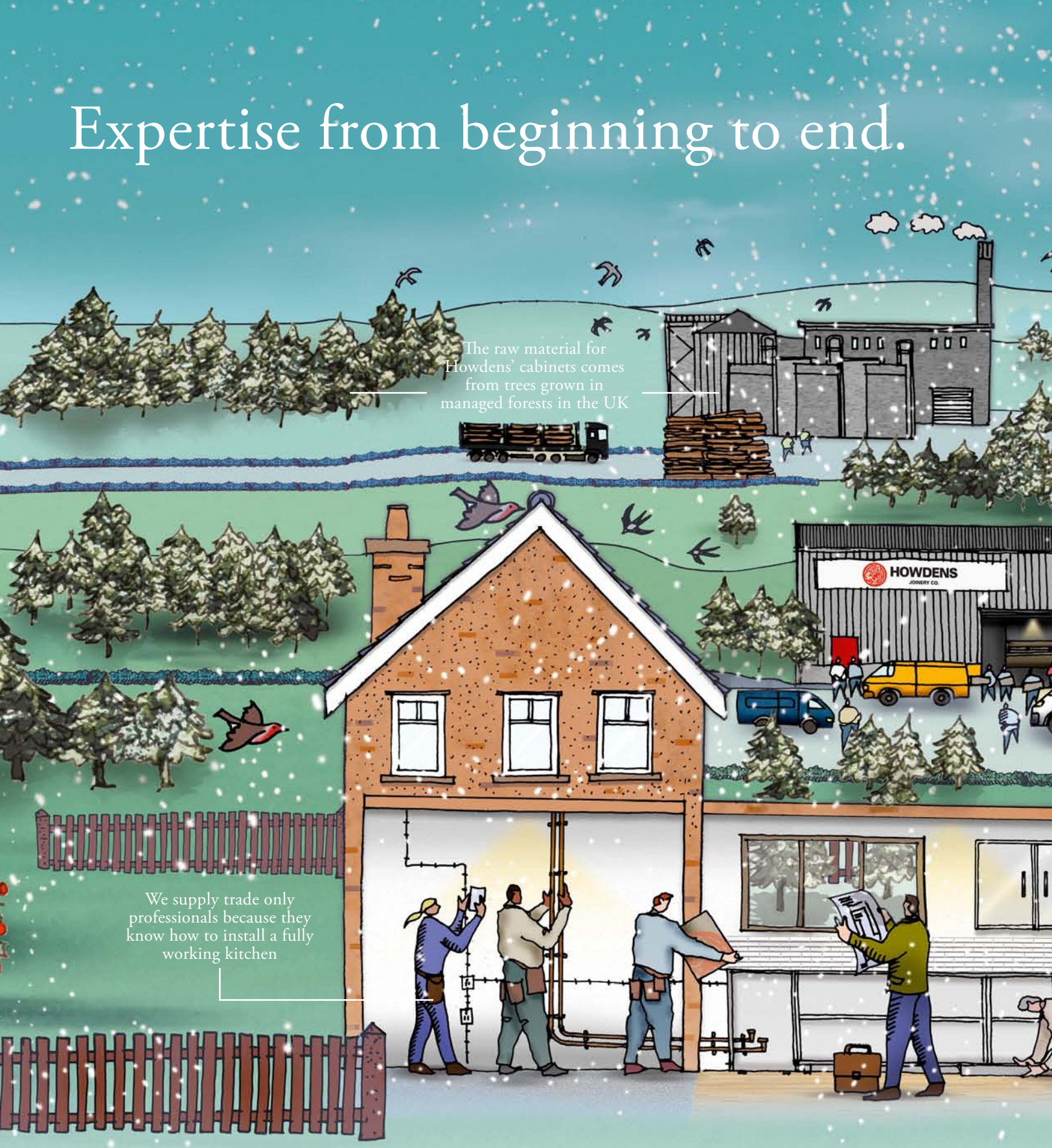
What's behind a Howdens kitchen?

Turn the page to read our story...

Expertise from beginning to end.



Howdens Joinery is the UK's largest manufacturer and supplier of fitted kitchens, appliances and joinery products.

We know it takes trade specialists to install a great-looking kitchen and, importantly, one that works every time, every day. That's why we only sell to trade professionals like your local builder.

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arada stoves

aradastoves.com

Putting warmth at the heart of the home

Stay on top of it all this December…

Image Tesco

HOW TO… be ready for guests

- The festive season often springs surprises on us when it comes to entertaining guests, which is why it is best to have something up your sleeve for unexpected guests. A stock of biscuits, cheese and chutney; a box of mince pies, and a couple of bottles of wine, will go a long way at short notice.
- When getting ready for guests, always write down a list of everything you will need. Include everything, such as any flowers or candles, plates and glasses, and decorations. This will instantly make you feel more organised, will avoid you forgetting anything, and is also useful for delegating chores to other people.
- Whether you have a couple of close friends over for dinner, or are throwing a larger bash, always stick to what you know – don't attempt something new for the first time. Keep it simple and you will get to spend less time in the kitchen and more time with your friends and family. They are more likely to remember this than the show-stopping dessert you did, or didn't, manage to pull off.
- Don't forget to cater for everyone at a buffet. People might forget to let you know about allergies or intolerances, so make sure you have a balance of food that offers something for veggies, and those who have a gluten or nut-free diet.
- An organised party-planner always works to a theme. This will make any planning easier and will give your party a pulled-together finish. This Christmas the supermarkets have plenty of classics for a best-of-British menu, as well as retro American favourites – both relaxed themes that are easy to achieve.

Laura's choice

'Like most, I really hate throwing away unused fruit and veg that has gone past its best. These ingenious GreenSaver containers from OXO are designed especially to keep produce fresher for longer. The carbon filter, made from coconut husks, absorbs ethylene gas; the inner basket allows airflow, and the sliding vent controls humidity, all of which help to reduce rotting. Available in three sizes, there is also a crisper insert available for the salad drawer.'

GreenSaver Produce Keepers, from £15 for 1.5l, OXO

Q&A

How can I re-create that authentic Christmas-tree scent in my home, without having to buy the real thing?

Scentsicles are discreet scented hanging ornaments that you can hang in an artificial tree, garland or wreath, to re-create that authentic, fresh scent in your home. Choose from spruce or fir for a tree scent, or add extra festive aroma with cinnamon, snow berry or silver birch (exclusive to John Lewis). Scentsicles are available from John Lewis, Waitrose, Homebase, Lakeland, Wyevale and Dobbies, priced at £6 for six.

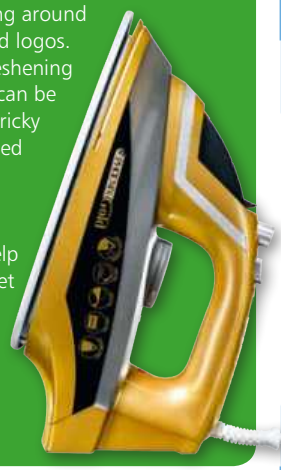
What to look out for THIS MONTH

Champagne saucers, £7 for two; **Lustre flute**, £10 for two; **cocktail shaker**, £12; **Margarita glass**, £7 for two; **glass ice bucket**, £15, all Tesco

▶ **Make a toast with these sophisticated cocktail glasses**

Great buy

The Phoenix Gold iron from JML is great for zipping through piles of ironing. The pressure adjuster means you can iron delicate garments, as well as heavy denims, without the risk of damage, and is great for steaming around embellishments and logos. Ideal for quickly freshening up items, the iron can be used vertically for tricky items such as pleated skirts, or for giving curtains a quick clean. It even has a texture brush to help remove fluff and pet hair as you steam.



Phoenix Gold, £49.99, JML

Hammered tray, £12; **hammered Champagne bucket**, £12; **hammered jug**, £10, all Next

◀ **Serve drinks in style with these gorgeous hammered metal accessories – definitely not just for Christmas!**

◀ **All the essentials for cocktail-making in one kit, and in this season's hottest colour, copper**

Copper cocktail shaker/tool kit, £30, House of Fraser

We test... roasters

We tried out a selection of roasters, here's what we found...

THINGS WE CONSIDERED

- How sturdy was the roaster?
- What size was it?
- Was it easy to lift and carry?

PYREX OPTIMUM ROASTER, £17.99

If you're looking for a versatile glass roasting dish, this 39cm x 25cm design is a great buy. It had a scratch, stain and odour-resistant finish, making it ideal for all sorts of foods, while the 6.8cm depth means that it has a large capacity of 4L. It is safe for use in the oven up to 300ºC, plus it can also be used in the mircowave, dishwasher and freezer. The large handles make it easy to lift in and out of the oven. We used it to roast a family-sized meal of chicken legs with vegetables, and it came up sparkling afterwards without too much elbow grease.

TALA EXTRA LARGE ROASTER, FROM £30

This was the largest roaster we tested at 38cm x 32cm, and was also quite deep, making it perfect for a Christmas turkey. It wasn't as sturdy as the other roasters but still felt good quality and the non-stick coating was very easy to cook with and keep clean, plus it was dishwasher safe. It also came with a rack, which had large fold-out handles. The tray itself however didn't have any handles, although it was light to lift. It could be used with metal utensils.

JUDGE SPECIALITY COOKWARE HIGH OVAL ROASTER, £33.75

This mirror polished stainless steel roaster looks the part and was very solid. At 36cm x 26cm it's big enough to fit a chicken or joint of meat, making it perfect for your Sunday roast. We used it to roast potatoes, which turned out lovely and crisp and, with help from a little oil, didn't stick to the pan. The angled handles made it easy to lift in and out of the oven and the lid was great at stopping meat from drying out. It's dishwasher safe too.

TEFAL MINERAL SIGNATURE ROASTER, £54, JOHN LEWIS

This roaster measured 35cm x 26cm, and felt incredibly sturdy, plus the thickness would ensure that it didn't buckle in the heat of the oven. As it was cast aluminium it was also very light, making it easy to lift – the large handles on either side also helped with lifting the roaster out of the oven. The safe, non-stick coating made for easy cooking and cleaning, and it was dishwasher safe. Metal utensils could even be used on it, except whisks and knives.

Consumer NEWS

Stay on top of the latest issues and hot topics with our monthly round-up of news

Get the retail buzz

Following recent research, AO.com has found some interesting facts about our shopping habits. Although some people still enjoy their 'Pretty Woman' moment, walking out of a store with armfuls of bags, many of us admit to getting that shopping buzz when opening a package received after shopping online. Online shopping provides two moments of gratification – an instant high when you purchase, plus the thrill of opening the parcel when it arrives. 40% of respondents said that the chance to show off to family and friends gave them the ultimate buzz, with many even arranging for luxury or extravagant items to be delivered to work so that they have an audience when opening them.

Dirty laundry

A recent report from kitchen appliance manufacturer Hoover has revealed some of the desperate measures Brits have gone to when they haven't done their laundry. According to the survey results, women are 50% more likely than men to take dirty laundry out of the basket to wear again if they haven't had time to put a wash on. Unbelievably, one in ten of us have bought new clothes because we don't have anything clean to wear. The latest appliances aim to help us make laundry a more hassle free task – Hoover's Wizard range can even be controlled via an app, so that you can control, monitor and manage it remotely.

Landmark knowledge

How much do you know about cities across the UK? According to a study by Cities Talking, Brits struggle even when it comes to England's historic and celebrated capital city, London, where the average person can only name four landmarks. The research claims that over a quarter of people don't know which city Nelson's Column is in, while we have even more limited knowledge of Oxford and Cambridge, with almost two fifths unable to name even one landmark in either. Cities Talking is a mobile tour guide app, which offers a range of audio tours of UK and worldwide cities, which you can listen to via your smartphone.

A labour of love

The Modern Day Slavery Act has just been given Royal Assent. This means that as from October 2015, any British business with a turnover of more than £36 million, globally, has to report annually on its efforts to ensure that slave labour is not used in its supply chains. Nina Smith, Executive Director of GoodWeave, the organisation which works to end child labour in the rug industry and runs the GoodWeave rug labelling scheme, says: 'Supply chain transparency and responsibility are what GoodWeave is all about, particularly concerning child labour and trafficking. We applaud this important step taken by Parliament.'

Be Christmas savvy

If you're determined to make some pre-Christmas cutbacks this year, take a look at www.mysupermarket.co.uk. It's a useful independent price comparison website, which collects prices from the main UK supermarkets, aiming to provide transparent pricing, promotion and product information to help you save on supermarket shopping. You fill your online basket with products, and the site compares your basket across all retailers, and gives you the option to switch your basket to a cheaper supermarket, helping you to save pounds this festive season.

Feature Lisa Hibberd

Consumer news... IN FOCUS

When something we buy isn't right, what are our rights when it comes to returns?

If you've ever experienced problems when trying to return faulty goods, it's time to arm yourself with your consumer rights. Sometimes a refund or exchange is required because an item of clothing doesn't fit or it was an unwanted gift but it's not quite clear where we stand. Then there's the issue of online shopping and different stores having different rules. Here's the low-down on what you're entitled to, no matter what the shop assistant says…

Top tip

The same consumer rights apply to second-hand and sale goods – they should be of satisfactory quality and if they are faulty, you can return them.

The law

It's important to know your legal rights before you start:

✓ When you pay for something, whatever it is, you enter into a contract with the seller.

✓ This means that the seller has agreed to provide your 'statutory rights'.

✓ There are different rules depending on whether you've bought goods or services.

✓ Goods are defined as anything you can hold, from a new top to a designer toaster. It could be new from a shop, second-hand or bought online. If the goods come with a service such as a mobile phone with contract, then this is a service contract.

✓ Legal protection is from the Sale of Goods Act 1979 and the item you buy must be 'satisfactory, as described'. If the item is not, then you have a legal right to take it back. Items must also be fit for purpose and last a reasonable length of time.

✓ Services are anything from having building work done on your house to dining out. Consumer law gives you the right to have the service carried out with reasonable care and skill and if it's not, quote the Supply of Goods and Services Act 1982.

What to do

When you want to return something, here's how to go about it:

- Whether you get a refund, an exchange or credit note will depend on the retailer's policy.
- Always keep your receipt and take it with you. If you don't have the receipt, the retailer has no legal obligation to give your money back but some stores will issue a credit note or exchange, so always ask.
- Take the debit or credit card you paid with, especially if you'd like a refund.
- It always helps if you have the original packaging too.

Shopping on eBay

Buying from online auction sites:

✓ There is a difference between 'buy it now' and auction pieces.

✓ When you buy it now, you have the same protection as if you are purchasing from a shop (ie: statutory rights and cooling off period).

✓ For bidding, new Consumer Contracts Regulations mean that you now have an automatic right to cancel, from the moment you place your order until 14 days from the day you receive the goods.

✓ If you end up in a dispute with a seller, the eBay Money Back Guarantee scheme will help.

Who is responsible?

Don't be intimidated if a shop assistant tells you it's not their problem:

✓ It's not the manufacturer that you need to deal with but the place where you bought the item.

✓ The seller has a legal duty to put things right, as your contract is with them.

✓ If you return an item within six months of purchasing, then it's up to the retailer to prove the item wasn't faulty when you bought it. After six months, the burden of proof is yours.

✓ You can also use the Limitations Act, which gives buyers up to six years after purchase to complain. The longer you wait though, the harder it will be to take it back.

Dos and Don'ts

These are the basic rules:

✓ DO return any unwanted or faulty items as soon as possible.

✓ DO write 'it's a gift' on any receipts or ask for a gift receipt when you purchase.

✓ DO double check suitability and size before you buy.

✓ DO pay by credit card if it costs over £100 as you're covered in the event that something goes wrong.

✓ DON'T just assume you can exchange an item if it's the wrong size – always check when you buy.

✓ DON'T think that because you're buying online, you have fewer rights.

✓ DON'T assume that auction sites have different rules.

Useful contacts

- Citizens Advice has plenty of useful information on everything from consumer contracts to scams, Trading Standards and making a claim. Visit **www.citizensadvice.org.uk.**
- Money Saving Expert has advice on goods and services and what your rights are at **www.moneysavingexpert.com.**
- Search your consumer rights at **www.which.co.uk.**
- If you think you've been untreated fairly, you can find help at **www.gov.uk.**

Feature Hayley Gilbert **Image** iStock

Decorating

Discover our favourite festive decorating trend

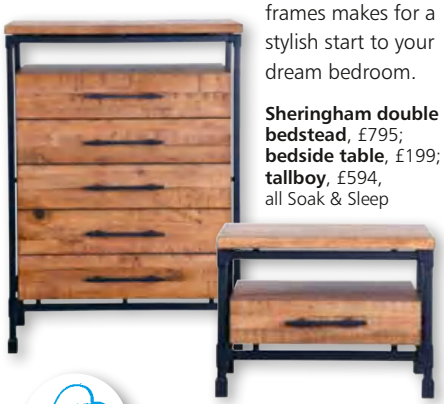
Feature Laura McLeish Image M&S

Trend: Frosted glamour

There's always the temptation at Christmas to dress up your house like a grotto, but with this trend your home can't fail to look anything but sophisticated. The silver, white and mint green colour palette is a refreshing change to traditional red and the addition of silver glitter and faux crystals means it's just as festive. Decorations can be anything from delicate beaded snowflakes to white wicker wreaths, and woodland stags and fir trees will add to the Scandi feel. This trend works well with both neutral and darker home décor and if the mint green clashes with your walls, pick out a cool blue or grey instead. Complete your home's festive transformation with lots of greenery, on everything from your front door to your table setting.

A brand new bedroom

Soak & Sleep is known for its stylish bathroom and bedroom accessories and now the company has added another string to its bow with a debut range of bedroom furniture and lighting. The four collections – Winchester, Sheringham, Haslemere and Cranbrook – are all different but all very much on trend, and like Soak & Sleep's other items, they're reasonably priced too. Our favourite is the Sheringham collection, with a bed, bedside table and tallboy unit made from solid American poplar and birch wood. The natural wood teamed with industrial metal frames makes for a stylish start to your dream bedroom.



Sheringham double bedstead, £795; **bedside table**, £199; **tallboy**, £594, all Soak & Sleep

Christmas by candlelight

For a quick décor update that won't break the bank, we recommend this adorable wooden lantern from Wilko. A great item for lovers of the ever-popular woodland trend, the stag cut-out will look great with a flickering candle behind it. Buy a few to dot down the middle of the dinner table or add one to your fireplace display to up the cosy factor in your living room this Christmas.

Stag wooden lantern, £6, Wilko

Snuggle up

You won't want to get out of bed come Christmas morning once you're under this charming bedding set from George. The duvet cover features a selection of different illustrated Christmas trees in black and white, with miniature trees on one side so you can turn it over for a second look. What's more, because the design isn't overly festive, you can use it to cheer up your bedroom throughout January and beyond.

Christmas tree duvet set, from £10, George Home

CHECK OUT OUR NEW DECORATING PAGES AT WWW.YOURHOMEMAGAZINE.CO.UK

TREND ALERT... Indulgence

Treat your home to a helping of high-life style…

Feature Laura Higgins **Background wallpaper** Yasmin Cream Gold wallpaper, £79 per roll, Eijffinger at Wallpaperdirect.com

After years of pared-back trends dominating the interiors stores, it's high time to embrace a more luxurious look, perfectly timed for Christmas.

This trend has a dark and mysterious colour palette, with inky black, graphite greys and a mix of jewel-toned colours such as emerald, sapphire and amethyst. Precious metals highlight the scheme with gold, copper and silver featuring heavily.

The indulgent look also has a feel of a bygone era, with Art Deco designs and shapes making a bold and opulent impact. Polished and dramatic, geometric patterns, high-shine finishes and luxurious fabrics, such as velvet and silk, make this trend the ultimate in luxe living…

Laura
Lifestyle Editor

Combine rich jewel tones such as emerald green and sapphire blue, for an opulent scheme

Eltham armchair in Deco Velvet Green, £749; **Elliston large sofa in Modici Velvet Teal**, £2,099; **Carraway bookcase**, £699; **Conran Kitson coffee table**, £299; **Shine rug**, £209; **Naples floor light**, £149; **Ecuador lamp shade**, £59, all M&S

Shimmering peacock hues make a striking scheme

Eltham armchair in Lasenby Teal, £649; **Conran Kitson coffee table**, £299; **Diamond candle holder**, £29.50; **Triangular hurricane**, £25; **6ft Blue Spruce tree**, £175; **gold tree topper**, £10; **baubles**, from £3; **gift wrap**, from £3.50; **ribbon gold foil tie**, £2.50, all M&S

These glitzy frames are a nod towards the Art Deco era

Triangle picture frames, from £20, House of Fraser

Spend vs Save

Still on-trend, the pineapple gets a metallic makeover

by Sainsbury's gold-effect pineapple, £12, Sainsbury's

Gold pineapple, £25, John Lewis

Clockwise from top: **Belgravia black oak laminate flooring**, £14.99 per sq m, Carpetright. **Belvedere 111250 wallpaper from Palmetto collection**, £48 per roll, Harlequin. **Alhambra Chartreuse fabric**, £55 per m, Olivia Bard. **Heavenly Elk velvet 2088/15**, £60 per m, Villa Nova. **Barnard Chartreuse fabric**, £44 per m, Olivia Bard. **Adventurer (7) Absolute matt emulsion**, £37 per 2.5l, Little Greene.

Celebrate in style this Christmas with a sophisticated cocktail area

Carraway drinks cabinet, £599; **Gold leaf wreath**, £39.50; **Deco ice bucket**, £39.50; **Stag tealight holder**, £15; **Champagne saucer**, £15 for two; **beaded tree in a dome**, £19.50; **Deco tray**, £35; **Deco bar tools**, £15 for two pack; **Deco cocktail shaker**, £17.50; **Martini glasses**, £15 for four, all M&S

Hexagonal shapes and angular designs give this trend a modern edge

Hex side table, £125, Next

Chic barware in black and gold will ensure your soirées are sophisticated

Black Martini glasses, £7 for two, George Home

For a really eye-catching scheme, team black with gold

Star tealight holders, £1.50; **candles**, from £3; **baubles**, from £1; **Luna dinner set**, £25; **wine glasses**, £7 for set of two; **Midas cutlery**, £20 for set of 16; **copper candle holder**, £7; **candelabra**, £12; **Martini glass**, £4 for two; **gold foil star**, £2, all Asda

Spend vs Save

Store away trinkets in a jade-coloured box

Green marble square box, £60, John Lewis

Trinket box, £29.50, M&S

Protect surfaces with these Criterion-inspired Art Deco coasters

Criterion coasters, £18.50 for four, Within

A mix of grey and silvery tones will create a subtle take on this trend

Levin ceiling light, £240; **Emily double bed**, £299; **Greek key rug in silver grey**, £460, all John Lewis

Take the edge off of strong jet black with softer taupe and mink, in luxurious fabrics

Vista four-seater sofa in Silver, £998; **Bridgewater square coffee table**, £599, both DFS

Don't forget the details – statement lighting can complete your stylish scheme

Saga gold pendant, £150, House of Fraser

Art Deco-style designs will add elegance to your scheme

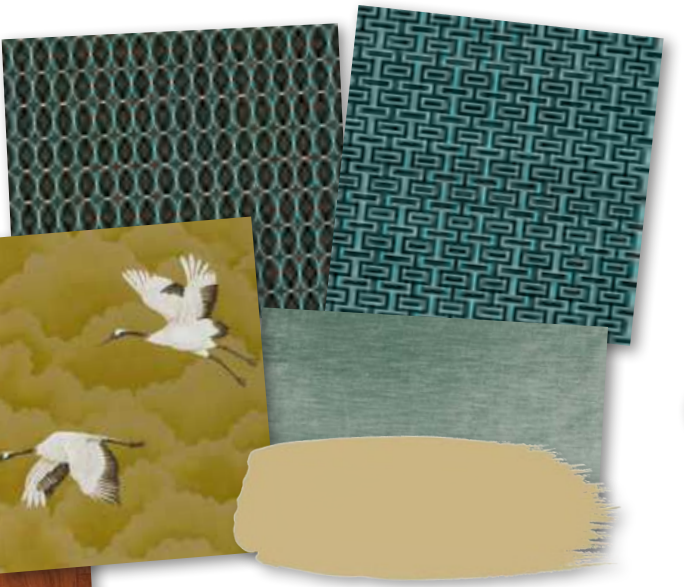
Luxe geo bedding set, from £25; **Marble base lamp**, £28; **Hex mirror**, £175; **Zhara laser cut pendant**, £45, all Next

Choose geometric detailing on accessories

Hex mirror, £175, Next

Display light-reflecting accessories with a metallic finish

Gold wavy top vase, £10, George Home



Clockwise from top left: **Renaissance weave 005**, £45 per m; **Intaglio weave 008**, £55 per m, both Blendworth. **Heavenly Vapour velvet 2088/43**, £60 per m, Villa Nova. **Bath Stone (64) Absolute matt emulsion**, £37 per 2.5l, Little Greene. **Cranes in Flight 111235 wallpaper from Palmetto collection**, £58 per roll, Harlequin. **Perspective Merbau UF996 laminate**, £27.99 per sq m, Quick-Step.

Chic cushions

Cosy up your sofa with a selection of shimmering cushions

Gold velvet cushion, £9, George Home

Aqua velvet cushion, £25, House of Fraser

Grey woven geo cushion, £16, Next

Gold sequin cushion, £15, Sainsbury's

Charlston square cushion, £29.50, Within

It's now a calming and sophisticated space

Warming copper tones, plus a cleverly reconfigured layout, ensure Glenda Piper's once uninspiring bedroom is now the perfect chic retreat

Before

Good idea!

As a general rule, it only takes two rolls of wallpaper to create a feature wall, allowing you to indulge a passion for more expensive finishes.

Good idea!

Glenda used masking tape and a tester pot to paint a smart border around her mirror – but it would work equally well around a picture.

Sectioning off a portion of the room for clothes storage and bathing, still left the couple with plenty of room to add a modern pampering station for Glenda, while choosing a stain-resistant carpet allowed for a paler finish

When Glenda Piper, 44, and husband Mike, 48, bought their 1950s home, in Kent, with children, Georgie, Gabby and Ben, they knew the dated semi required radical changes, so were well prepared for the hard work ahead. 18 months on, however, and with the major works complete, Glenda was delighted to be able to finally turn her attention to the master bedroom. 'What I really wanted was a grown up space, where I could escape the children, and unwind after a busy day,' she explains.

Glamorous cushions add a welcoming and luxurious touch, and also offer a little extra support when sitting up in bed and taking in the views

Total Cost £1,143

STEP ONE One reason the couple initially bought their home was for the uninterrupted views over open countryside, so when it came to replacing the original rotting windows, Glenda also took the decision to install generous French doors and a Juliette balcony in the bedroom. 'It was a bit of an indulgence at £1,350, but I love them, and it really opens up the space, especially now we've sectioned off part of the room for an en suite and boarded-up the awkward, shallow alcoves either side of the chimney breast in order to utilise the wall space more effectively,' she smiles.

STEP TWO Keen to make the most of the reduced bedroom area, the couple also decided to add a separate partitioned section within the en suite for a bank of fitted wardrobes. While the addition of a clever space-saving pocket door ensures maximum floor space in all areas. 'The door simply slides seamlessly into the stud wall cavity when open,' says Glenda. 'And I think its clean, pared back look really enhances the simple, sophisticated scheme I had in mind.' In fact, with built-in wardrobes on order, the only pieces required for the bedroom were a simple low-lying bed, sourced on eBay, and a few high street buys in the form of a striking dressing table, copper chair and bedside tables.

STEP THREE As the bedroom has a fairly low ceiling, Glenda always knew crisp, white space-enhancing walls were on the cards, while her metallic accent was inspired by the many lovely metal finds in her local shops. Her initial ▷

Glenda turned to the high street when sourcing inexpensive, on trend metallic accessories

A generous bank of glazing, teamed with an opulent colour scheme and boutique styling means Glenda and Mike now have a luxurious and light-filled adult retreat

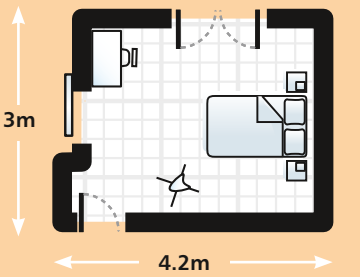
plan, however, was to introduce silver, and it was only when Mike pointed out that this might feel rather cold against the freshly painted white walls, that it was rejected in favour of a warming bronze and copper mix. 'The deciding factor was actually the wallpaper, which was an online impulse buy, but one I have never regretted, as it really makes the room – the shimmering surface not only adds a real touch of opulence, but also helps reflects light around the room,' she says. The carpet, however, was Mike's little bit of luxury, as she explains: 'Mike hates hard flooring so we treated ourselves to a deep pile carpet for added comfort and texture.'

STEP FOUR With an array of copper, gold and bronze soft furnishings and accessories added, along with simple sheers and statement lighting, including an amazing sale bargain of a tripod lamp for £20, Glenda was still keen to add just one last finishing touch. 'I've never had the luxury of a dressing table before, so to make it a real focal point I decided to try adding a painted border around the mirror,' she smiles. At just £3, this inexpensive addition is now one of her favourite features and, although, the en suite area remains a work in progress, Glenda is delighted with the results. 'I can't wait for the summer months, when we can relax in bed with a cup of tea and soak in the views and fresh air, from the open French doors!' YH

Good idea!

Inexpensive baskets are great for storing accessories or scarves and can be customised to match your scheme using left over paint.

ROOMPLAN



THE DETAILS

Paint & wallpaper	£189.29
Furniture	£380
Carpet	£276
Radiator	£124
Lighting	£54
Window treatment	£25
Mirrors	£94.99
TOTAL	**£1,143.28**

Shopping list

Zoffany Lustre Tile Quartz wallpaper, £85 per roll, WallpaperDirect. **Walls in: Pure Brilliant white matt emulsion**, £16 per 5l; **feature rectangle in: Copper Blush matt emulsion**, £3.29 per 250ml tester pot, both Dulux. **Primo Ultra carpet in Portland Stone**, from £23 per sq m, Cormar Carpets. **Kilo white metal console table**, £95, Habitat. **Low pine loft bed**, £60; **white two-column radiator**, £124, both eBay. **Copper Tolix-style chair**, £85, Cult Furniture. **Azia copper side tables**, £70 each; **matt satin Champagne throw**, £80; **copper picture frames**, £6 each; **embellished beaded cushion**, £20, all Next. **White linen double duvet cover and pillowcase set**, £35; **painted silver lacquer box**, £30; **copper wire birdcage**, all a selection at TK Maxx. **Copper metallic star light**, £10; **copper cushions**, £5 each; **matt silver cushion**, £2, all Primark. **Teresia white sheer curtains**, £9 per pair; **Stave full height mirror**, £30; **Krusning pendant light**, £9; **PS 2014 table mirror**, £15; **basket**, £4, all Ikea. **Curtain pole**, £16, B&Q. **Cube mirror**, £49.99, Homebase. **Copper finish glass & wood lamp**, £45; **candle holders**, from £2, both Sainsbury's. **Vases from a selection**, Dunelm. **Pocket door system**, £294, Eclisse.

Feature Paula Woods **Styling** Jo Rigg **Photos** Lizzie Orme

3 of the best... copper accessories

£8 from George Home
Ensure you're always on time with this stylish double bell alarm clock.

£15 from Very
Pile these trendy copper cushions high for that luxurious bedroom feel.

£79 from Made
The Alana copper bedside table is a must-have buy for any room boasting this popular shade.

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It may be small but it's perfectly formed

Beatriz Sant Mora made the most of limited bedroom space and period features to create a cosy, welcoming retreat on a budget

Good idea!
Spray paint is a quick and easy way to transform old items, Beatriz needed just one can to revamp her previously black lamp, and covered the shade in a remnant of curtain fabric.

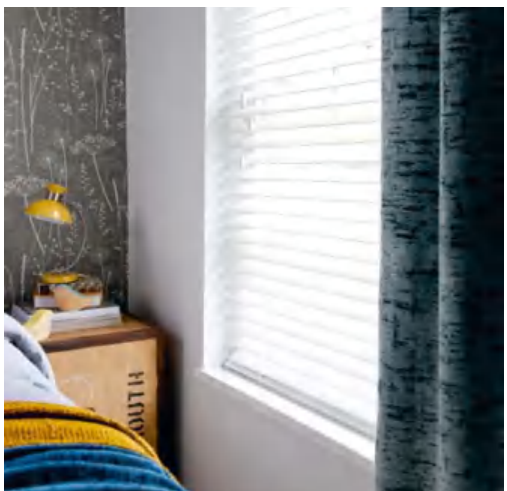
When Spanish born, Beatriz Sant Mora, turned her back on London living in favour of a home by the sea, she knew she would have to take on a renovation project in order to make the most of her limited budget. 'I settled on Margate because of its great links to the capital, and I love the fact that I now live just minutes from the beach,' she says. However, as an ex-rental, her two-bedroom period conversion required serious updating and with no choice but to live on site during the works, Beatriz was keen to create a haven, in which to escape the chaos at the end of each day.

STEP ONE At just over 3m x 3m Beatriz's bedroom allowed little additional space for bulky furniture, so having stripped the walls and removed the old carpet, her first challenge was how to make the most of limited floor space. Luckily the room already had a built-in cupboard that housed an ancient boiler, and as this was to be replaced anyway, Beatriz took the decision to relocate it to the kitchen, to free up space. 'With the boiler and pipework removed, the interior walls required some serious filling and painting, but it was worth the effort, as having added inexpensive rails and shelving I was surprised at just how much storage I was able to create,' she smiles.

STEP TWO Not surprisingly, Beatriz loves the original period features in her home, and was keen to make the most of the fireplace, with its striking panelled surround. Sadly, however, a section of panelling had been damaged by the previous tenants and was temporarily boarded, so Beatriz was delighted when a joiner friend offered to repair the area for free. 'This just left me with the unenviable task of stripping the entire area, as both the fireplace and panels were covered in layers of badly applied paint,' she recalls. 'And although it looks great now, I can honestly say I really didn't enjoy my first experience of working with chemical strippers.'

STEP THREE A more enjoyable task was deciding on décor – and while a light colour scheme was always on the cards, in order to help open up the room, Beatriz was also keen to add some pattern in the form of a feature wall. 'I spotted ▷

Smart painted wooden Venetian blinds allow you to control lighting levels and privacy in the bedroom. While a single heavy drape, adds extra warmth and cosiness during the winter months



A striking feature wall and space-enhancing grey palette, teamed with pops of colour and statement furnishings, including a pretty chandelier, metal bedstead and plenty of cosy linen layers, ensures Beatriz's bedroom, is a calm and peaceful retreat, dedicated to comfort and style

Total Cost £1,434

Good idea!

An upturned tea chest, bought for just £5 from a local second-hand store, makes for an interesting and quirky bedside table.

A rejuvenated fireplace and panelling guarantees there is plenty of period charm in this compact room, which, as it is not a high traffic area, has also been fitted with a luxuriously pale, deep pile carpet – although Beatriz wisely opted for a practical stain-resistant finish

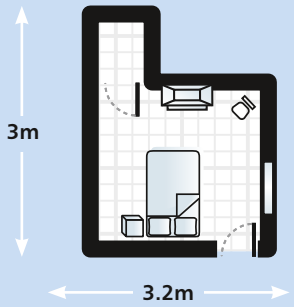
Good idea!
A simple row of decorative hooks will help keep clutter at bay in smaller spaces.

Having commandeered the built-in cupboard for clothing and shoes, Beatriz uses a large trunk, positioned neatly within the restored fireplace, to store lesser-used items

the beautiful wallpaper in a magazine and just couldn't resist,' she smiles. 'I only needed two rolls, but as it wasn't cheap I did decide to invest in a decorator to hang it for me.' The remaining walls and woodwork were finished in soft shades of grey and a tonal deep pile carpet was fitted for a touch of luxury and comfort underfoot. 'It's quite a simple look, but one I think will stand the test of time, as it can easily be updated by just changing soft furnishings and accessories,' says Beatriz.

STEP FOUR When it came to furnishing the room on a budget, Beatriz turned to the internet and soon spotted her lovely metal bed. 'Not only was it a bargain, but, as it's quite high, I can utilise the space underneath for extra storage,' she smiles. An evening on eBay also resulted in an Ercol chair, and useful storage trunk that now sits proudly in the fireplace. While a handy row of hooks, again sourced online, helps make use of wasted wall space. However, it was just outside her front door, in a nearby store, that she found her innovative, and inexpensive, tea chest table. An inherited floor lamp was also given a new lease of life, thanks to a can of spray paint. While cosy bed linen and cushions, plus a smart painted wood blind and tactile velvet drape complete the look, in what Beatriz is pleased to report, 'is now the ideal place to relax after a hard day spent renovating.' YH

ROOMPLAN



THE DETAILS

Furniture	£288.99
Blind & curtain	£420
Carpet	£364
Lighting	£102.99
Paint & wallpaper	£228
Mirror	£30
TOTAL	**£1,433.98**

Shopping list

Paper Meadow wallpaper in Charcoal, £69 per roll, Hannah Nunn. **Walls in: Shallows absolute matt emulsion**, £37 per 2.5l; **panelling and woodwork in: Inox intelligent eggshell**, £53 per 2.5l, both Little Greene. **Painter's Touch multi-purpose spray paint in Blossom White**, £9.49 per 400ml, Rust-Oleum. **Aurelius double bed**, £199, Original Bedstead Company. **Sensation carpet in Arctic Grey**, £26 per sq m, Cormar Carpets. **50mm wooden blind in Purity**, £216 includes measuring and fitting, Hillarys. **Curtain and lampshade in Perla velvet**, £68 per m, Harlequin. **Stave mirror**, £30; **Gurli blue throw**, £5.50; **Ludde sheepskins**, £30 each, all Ikea. **Medium Juliet chandelier**, £85, Cox & Cox. **Galvanised hook rail**, £18, Store. **Fur throw**, £19.99, HomeSense. **Grey knot jersey bedding set**, £30, Bhs. **Agadir teal cushion covers**, £7.99; **cosy Skandi retro lamp**, £17.99; **wooden birds**, £4.99 each; **Revival ochre throw**, £29.99, all Dunelm. **Ombre cushion**, £7, Asda. **Vintage Ercol chair**, £50; **metal storage trunk**, £39.99, both eBay.

Feature Paula Woods **Styling** Jo Rigg **Photos** Lizzie Orme

3 of the best... metal bed frames

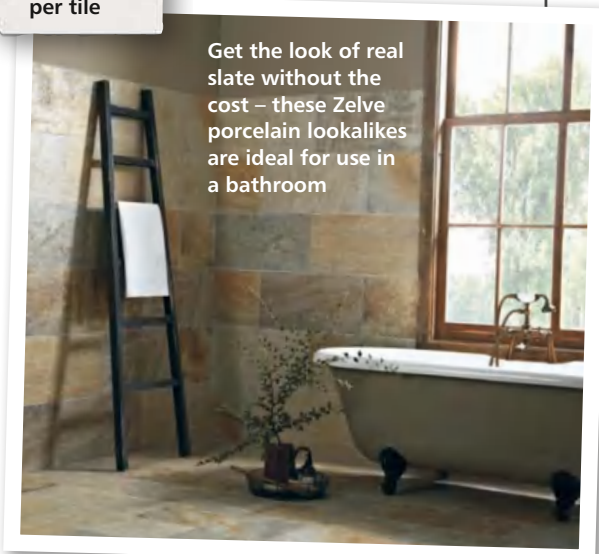
£80 from Ikea
Who could resist the Leirvik bed at this bargain price? Perfect for achieving that classic charm.

£199 from Next
We love the mid-century feel to the design of the Irvine metal bed.

£449 from Furniture Village
If you fancy something a bit different and enjoy making a statement then consider the Summer metal bed frame – the cut out flower details make a beautiful focal point.

Transform your home with Topps Tiles

If you're planning a home improvement project this new year, check out Topps Tiles for a wealth of inspiration and advice, as well as great savings



Get the look of real slate without the cost – these Zelve porcelain lookalikes are ideal for use in a bathroom

Once the festive season is done and dusted for another year, many of us start to think about refreshing our homes for the new year ahead. Although sprucing up your rooms can seem daunting, help is at hand with Topps Tiles, the UK's leading tile specialist. We understand how important it is to get any home improvement project right, and that the choice of tiles can be overwhelming, so we're dedicated to helping you through every aspect of your tiling project.

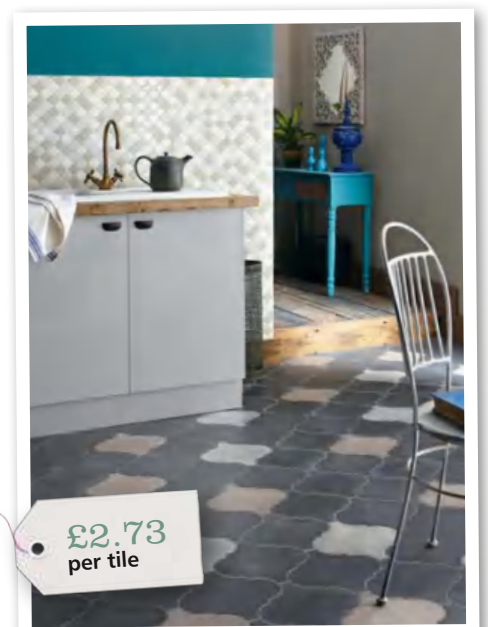
Whether your style is chic industrial or rustic country, there's something in store for everyone, plus you can chat to our knowledgable, friendly staff if you're in need of a little extra guidance.

So, whether you're hoping to achieve a Moroccan-inspired floor, a stunning stone bathroom or a stylish wood-effect hallway, visit your local store or visit www.toppstiles.co.uk.

Try before you buy

If you're finding it hard to choose, why not take advantage of our sample service? Order online or pick up in store so that you can try a few designs in your own home.

These stunning large format FS York tiles capture the essence of the Mediterranean with their intricate detailing



Reminiscent of Moroccan architecture, the Parthian range of wall and floor tiles (shown here on the floor) is both on-trend yet effortlessly timeless

Brand Ambassador, Phil Spencer, visits Topps Tiles' Bayswater store

Don't forget!

Pay a visit to your local Topps Tiles store to see the full range, get advice from the specialists and make a great start on updating your home. Visit www.toppstiles.co.uk for more information and to find details of your nearest store.

Topps Tiles

YH PROMOTION

With a pale grey and soft pink colour scheme and loads of imagination, Laura has managed to transform a dated room into a cosy retreat. The walls were treated to some floral wallpaper, a new show-stopper bed takes centre stage and made-to-measure curtains finish off the look

Total Cost
£2,871

I love to escape to my new, tranquil bedroom

Using muted shades of greys and pinks, Laura Turner has created her own dreamy bedroom to relax in

Good idea!

For extra wide windows invest in some made-to-measure curtains to fit the exact window area. A blackout lining was added to the fabric to ensure a good night's sleep without sunlight creeping through.

New white painted furniture provides plenty of storage and a Venetian mirror creates a handy dressing area. The patterned curtains and wallpaper add charm and character while still creating a calming feel

Before

Good idea!

Get your jewellery organised with some stick-on hooks. Make use of the inside of a wardrobe door to hang up your jewels and keep them close to hand.

Laura Turner, 31, was very excited to move into her new home with partner Dean and son, Kairo. 'We chose this maisonette in a purpose-built block because it was all we could afford in the area that we love. It's right in the centre of Battersea so we have excellent transport links, great schools and shops.' Laura wasn't struck by its kerb appeal from the outside, but knew it had lots of potential inside. 'The bedroom had been painted in a horrid dark blue colour and all the pipework was boxed in with ugly plastic casing,' she explains. Laura had plenty of decorating ideas and couldn't wait to work her magic. With a new colour scheme of soft greys and pinks decided, Laura booked her decorator to get started.

STEP ONE Preparing the room was the first job. 'I couldn't wait to get rid of the blue paint on the walls, but it was important to update the old sockets and unsightly plastic casing first,' says Laura. New MDF boxing was made for the surface pipes, which were painted white.

While the decorators got busy, Laura took a trip to John Lewis to look at some wallpaper and paint samples. 'I had been thinking about soft grey for some time. It's very on trend and in all the magazines…I knew it would be a vast improvement on the bright blue,' Laura explains. While looking around the store, Laura was instantly drawn to a pretty floral wallpaper. 'I wasn't looking for florals, but I just loved the design and decided to wallpaper two opposite walls in the room. I knew it would add character to the space which lacked any real architectural features.' Laura then matched the wallpaper to a pale grey paint for the remaining two walls.

STEP TWO The room had bare floorboards but Laura preferred carpet to keep it warm and cosy underfoot. 'I much prefer carpet in a bedroom,' she ▷

Good idea!

Create the perfect spot to perch to put on shoes with a handy bench. Have a piece of thick foam cut to size and cover with a fabric remnant to co-ordinate with the rest of the room.

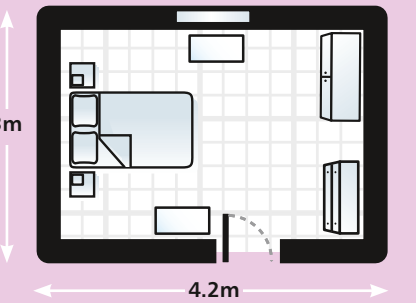
Laura chose ornate floral canvases to decorate the painted wall and add a feminine touch

explains. 'There's nothing worse than climbing out of bed in the winter onto a cold floor.' With a neutral-coloured carpet on order, Laura called out Hillarys to advise on a Roman blind for the window. After the sales consultant measured the window he explained the window was really quite wide, and suggested curtains instead. He showed Laura different fabric swatches and she chose a grey shade to tie in with the wallpaper. 'I was just going to opt for a simple blind but I'm so pleased I've chosen curtains now. They really cosy up the room and having curtains means I get to see more of the lovely leaf-design fabric,' she smiles.

A new bed was next on the list. 'Our old bed was ancient and Dean and I wanted to treat ourselves,' says Laura. They chose an upholstered bedstead in a plush taupe velvet to give the room a look of luxury.

STEP THREE The last job was to invest in some sturdy storage furniture. 'I took a trip to Ikea and found a pretty, well-priced chest of drawers and wardrobe to fit in perfectly.' With a growing jewellery collection, Laura got busy attaching some adhesive hooks to the inside of the wardrobe door, to keep her jewels organised. Laura also bought a white bench, which she updated with a cushion made from foam and half a metre of fabric. 'The bench was £9 from Ikea and I used a fabric remnant for the cushion. I also lined the shelf underneath with some leftover wallpaper. It a great place to keep my shoes and it's a handy spot to perch too,' she smiles. Laura found some pretty canvases to hang on one wall and some gorgeous cushions and a throw to make the room feel welcoming. 'It's unrecognisable,' says Laura. 'It's so serene now.' YH

ROOMPLAN



THE DETAILS

Paint	£37
Wallpaper	£336
Carpet	£480
Furniture	£1,377
Curtains & pole	£640.99
TOTAL	**£2,870.99**

Shopping list

Double Alice bed frame in Mink, £499; **Sapphire mattress**, £399, both Carpetright. **Fabric for bench cushion and throw: Odetta**, £62 per m; **Mirabella wallpaper**, £56 per roll, both Harlequin. **Tyssedal wardrobe**, £275; **Tyssedal chest of drawers**, £135; **Maryd tray table**, £45; **Lack bench**, £9; **Lindved side table**, £15; **Kvarnvik round boxes**, £13 for three, all Ikea. **French Grey Dark Absolute Matt emulsion**, £37 per 2.5l, Little Greene. **Beaumont double duvet cover**, £110; **Beaumont Oxford pillowcases**, £25 each, both Fable. **Isra Dove curtains**, £566, including measuring and fitting, Hillarys. **Drift knitted throw**, £85; **Repose grey cushion**, £35; **cosy faux fur cushion**, £50, all Bedeck. **Elements 3m (28mm diameter) pole set with Capella finials**, £74,99, Swish. **Avebury Kennet grey carpet**, £40 per sq m, Cormar Carpets. **Botanical Bloom canvas**, £12.50 each; **chalkboard dreams & wishes canvas**, £17.50, Graham & Brown. **Adhesive hooks**, from £3.49, Command. **Horse lantern table lamp**, £24.99; **grey Bali cushion**, £14.99; **mini fretwork wooden drawers**, £4.99; **grey sheepskin rug**, £39.99; **Venetian-style dressing table mirror**, £39.99, all Dunelm. **Vermont table lamp in flint grey**, £65.49, Suburban Living. **Floral embroidered cushions**, £44; **Josette cushion**, £40, both Laura Ashley.

Feature Emma Fishman **Photos** Lizzie Orme

3 of the best... bedside tables

£40 from Ikea
Keep it simple and natural with the Sandhaug bedside table – the tray top lifts up to reveal space for an extension plug socket to be neatly hidden out of sight.

£95 from The Scandinavian Shop
If space is minimal go slimline with the Menu Yeh wall table that will enhance a sleek bedroom scheme.

£129 from Swoon Editions
The Randall bedside cabinet combines ample storage with a stylish retro design.

£10 off when spending £50 online before the end of November with code **YHDEC15**

www.wesco-shop.co.uk

Tel: 01225 438 186 | Email: sales@wesco.co.uk

Bring Christmas cheer to every room

Welcome in the festive season with some stunning Scandi-style decoration ideas in vibrant red and white shades from just £1

Christmas countdown

Get crafty and make your own Advent calendar with an old frame. Simply string red ribbon from side to side and, using mini pegs, clip numbered tags with little gifts or decorations to mark each date. A simple star light cheers up the corner to shine bright all night long

Wooden star light, £10, George Home. **Wild & Wolf red classic telephone**, £51.95, Bloomsbury Store. **Arden wine glass**, £12 for four; **berry candle**, £5, both Next. **Advent wooden tags, ribbon, pegs and baubles**, from a selection at Hobbycraft. **Annabelle grey wash console table**, £249.99, Dunelm. **Gift bag**, £1; **large bell decoration**, £1, both Poundland. **White votive holder**, £7.99, Yankee Candle

Merry & bright

Bring a heart-warming feel to your home with some fun-filled decorating ideas. Stick to festive red and snowy white accessories teamed with woolly knits for a Nordic-inspired look. Dress your tree with some colour-popping decorations and continue the red and white theme with cosy cushions and throws. Make your mantelpiece into an impressive focal point with a fir cone and berry garland combined with plenty of twinkling candles. For an extra festive treat, add a seasonal wall sticker in bright red to transform your mirror in minutes – they're easy to apply and to remove too

Majestic 6ft tree, £200; **white wooden lantern**, £30, both Noma. **Winter's tale scene bauble**, £4, Sainsbury's. **Knitted jumper decorations**, £1 for two, Poundland. **Polar bear cushion**, £7; **faux fur cushion**, £10, both George Home. **Silver reindeer**, from £3.99; **quad sheepskin rug**, £129.99; **white squirrel decoration**, £4.99, all Dunelm. **Alpine Present stocking**, £10; **Arden wine glasses**, £12 for four; **Arden side plate**, £32 for a 12-piece set; **grey knitted bean cube**, £99, all Next. **Snowflake tree decorations**, £2.99; **cone and berry garland**, £29.99; **glass bauble with rope detail**, £4.99; **glass teardrop baubles**, £3.99; **wooden rose tree decoration**, £4.99 for two; **glass stripe drop bauble**, £6.99; **candy canes**, £2.99; **red star tree topper**, £6.99; **Letter to Santa tree decoration**, £1.99, all Wyevale Garden Centres. **HoHoHo Christmas lights sign**, £95; **willow tree skirt**, £30; **red knitted throw**, £39; **grey check throw**, £49, all John Lewis. **HoHoHo tags**, £3.50 per pack; **chalkboard wrapping kit**, £7.50; **HoHoHo garland**, £8, all Talking Tables. **Stocksund sofa**, £479; **Vinter bowl**, £1.50; **Vinter bird felt decoration**, £4.50 for four; **Vinter grey tray**, £6; **Vinter ribbon**, £3, all Ikea. **Christmas quote stickers on mirror**, £24, Nutmeg. **Mince pies**, from a selection at Aldi. **Wrapping paper, trims and ribbons**, from a selection at Hobbycraft. **Snowflake ceramic votive holder**, £3.99; **holly votive holder**, £2.99; **sparkling icicles votive holder**, £4.99; **red bucket votive holder**, £3.99, all Yankee Candle. **Pine cone candle**, £11.95, Nordic House. **Deer glitter cushion**, £19.99, Debono & Bennett

HoHoHo

Add cosy and warm accessories such as this knitted bean cube that can be used as an extra surface for drinks or another option for your guests to perch. We love the chalkboard wrapping paper that can be used to personalise your gifts. Adorn your gifts with plenty of red and white wrap, ribbons and tags to continue the Nordic theme

Grey knitted bean cube, £99, Next. **Magic crackers**, £11; **chalkboard wrapping kit**, £7.50, both Talking Tables. **Wrapping, tags and ribbon, Christmas card making kit**, from a selection at Hobbycraft. **Grey check throw**, £49, John Lewis. **Snowflake tree decoration**, £2.99, Wyevale Garden Centres

Feature & styling Emma Fishman **Photos** Lizzie Orme **Be candle safe – never leave a lit candle unattended.**

Festive showstopper

Make your own runner with plain red fabric and attach white felt stars for an instant makeover. To create extra appeal, spray old milk bottles white and add red and white ribbons and baubles to decorate the table. For a stunning centrepiece, collect long twigs from your winter walks in the woods and spray white to display colourful pompom and tree decorations for a magical showstopper

Red charger plates, £1; **red glitter stag**, £1; **stag dinner plate, bowl and side plate**, £1 each, all Poundland. **Arden wine glasses**, £12 for four; **Arden cutlery set**, £12 for a 16-piece set, both Next. **Pompom garland**, £14; **star scatter**, £3.50; **magic crackers**, £11; **striped straws**, £3, all Talking Tables. **Red fabric**, £10 per m; **white spray paint**, £7.99; **mini boxes**, £1; **felt**, 50p per sheet, all Hobbycraft. **Berry stem decoration**, £6, John Lewis

Dine in style

Add a Scandi twist to your dining table with some great-value crockery in red and white from just £1. Add a small parcel to each place setting then add extra sparkle with some table lights to finish off the festive look

Red charger plates, £1; **stag dinner plate, bowl and side plate**, £1 each; Poundland. **Arden cutlery set**, £12 for a 16-piece set, Next. **Table star lights**, £9.50, Talking Tables. **Star box**, £1; **hessian star bows**, £1 for four; **ribbon**, from £1, all Hobbycraft

Sitting pretty

Get the party started with a quick festive makeover of your dining chairs. Simply tie a collection of baubles to suit your colour theme and add a berry stem for an extra splash of colour

Red baubles, £7 for 50; **Vinter ribbon**, £3, both Ikea. **Ribbon**, from a selection at Hobbycraft. **Berry stem decoration**, £6, John Lewis

Festive touches

A red painted staircase is the perfect spot to add some little touches to make your Christmas feel extra special

Snowflake ceramic votive holder, £3.99; **holly votive holder**, £2.99; **sparkling icicles votive holder**, £4.99, all Yankee Candle. **Merry Christmas sticker**, £8; **snowflake stickers**, £12 for 20, both Nutmeg

Snuggle up

Cosy up your bedroom to keep the winter chills away with faux fur throws and cushions. Continue the red and white accessories giving your bedroom a Scandi wintry feel. An antler lamp and stag candle holder make a decorative display getting you into the Christmas spirit

Hemnes bedside table, £40, Ikea. **Jute postage sack**, £1, Poundland. **Winter kisses cushion**, £5, George Home. **Antler table lamp**, £55; **check bed linen**, from £40; **red Fairisle mules**, £15; **faux fur hot water bottle**, £8, all Next. **Reindeer tea light holder**, £12, Sainsbury's. **Paper honeycomb hanging decoration set**, £11, Talking Tables. **Faux fur throw**, £49; **grey ribbed cushion**, £15, both Very. **Stag glitter cushion**, £19.99, Debono & Bennett. **Red linen cushion**, £40, John Lewis. **Red bucket candle holder**, £3.99, Yankee Candle. **Bone china tea light holder**, £6.50, Nordic House. **Natural pine heart lights**, £6, Noma. **Sheepskin rug**, £129.99, Dunelm

50 gifts under £50

Make Christmas shopping hassle-free this year with our guide to some of the best gifts around

£10 and under

Ensure man's best friend is kept warm and snug this season

Multi stripe bone jumper, from £9; **multi stripe bone scarf**, £3, both Pets at Home

Small and big kids alike will be thrilled with this great stocking filler

Rubber band propelled aeroplane, £8.95, Dotcomgiftshop

These cute little bags will make a little one very happy on Christmas morning

Felt owl bags, £9.60 each, Joanna Wood

Colouring books for adults are all the rage – we love this animal-themed option

Millie Marotta's Animal Kingdom – A Colouring Book Adventure, from around £3.99, Amazon

A great after-dinner game

A perfect little stocking filler, these disguises and props will get the whole family involved

Christmas photo booth game, £7.50, Berry Red

A great winter warmer

This concentrated syrup will create the ultimate mulled wine

Mulling syrup, £10, Heal's

Ensure that pets don't miss out while every one is tucking in to a special Christmas Day meal – why not treat them to a tin of luxury food?

Venison and wild boar terrine for dogs; goose and duck feast for dogs, both £2.49 per tin; **purrr-fect salmon and prawn cocktail for cats; Christmas turkey feast for cats**, from 89p per tin, all Lily's Kitchen

A handy bluetooth speaker will ensure that a music lover can listen to their tunes wherever they are

Triple C bluetooth speaker, £10, M&S

Feature Lara Berry & Lisa Hibberd

▲ Feline fans will love this quirky cat notepad

Cat spiral notebook, £5, Bhs

▼ This collection of three Cornish ciders is bound to make someone smile

Cider gift set, £9.50, The Eden Project

▲ Any selfie-mad teenager will enjoy collating their favourite snaps in this special album

College Co selfie album, £5, Tesco

A great idea for crafters

▲ This set of mini drawers is perfect for keeping craft materials neat and tidy

House storage drawers, £10, Wilko

A treat for teachers

◀ This affordable box of treats is ideal for when you need to give just a little something

Petit Indulgence keepsake star, from around £5.50, Lily O'Brien's

▶ Encourage a friend or relative to save their pennies with this quirky money box design

Rocket money box, £8, George Home

▲ A playful pooch will adore this reindeer toy

Novelty dog toy, £6, Next

▼ A stunning stag head hook would make a great present for any home lover

by Sainsbury's 3D stag head hook, £8, Sainsbury's

▼ Kids and grown ups alike will enjoy these scrumptious milk and white chocolate penguins

Portly penguins, £7, Hotel Chocolat

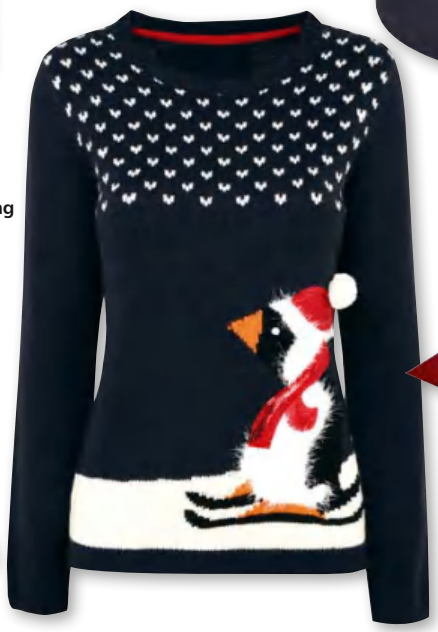
▶ A bottle of wine is always an appreciated present – we love the Wine Atlas range, available at Asda

Wine Atlas Bobal, from around £4.37; **Wine Atlas Marsanne**, from around £4.75; **Wine Atlas Cotes de Thau**, from around £4.50, all Asda

£25 and under

▼ You can't beat a Christmas jumper – we can't wait to get our hands on this chic penguin design

Penguin jumper, £25, Bhs



◀ Treat a keen beginner to a sewing starter kit

Filled sewing box, £17.50, M&S

▼ Keep crafters happy with this stylish bag to help keep their essentials to hand

Vintage by Hemingway swinging 60s sewing and knitting bag, £25, Unique & Unity

◀ This jar of hazelnut and chocolate biscuits is sure to go down a treat

Baci di Dama, £17.95, Carluccio's

A fab idea for party animals

▶ Little ones will be bouncing like Tigger in this adorable outfit

Winnie the Pooh Tigger character bodysuit, £12.95, The Disney Store

▶ A fun night would be in store for the recipient of these fabulous mixers

Global cocktail mixers, £20, Bhs

◀ This gorgeous leaf tray is ideal for keeping earrings or other trinkets in one place

Linea copper leaf tray, £15, House of Fraser

▲ Those who remember cassette tapes will love this quirky memo board

Cassette tape memo board, £22, The Contemporary Home

Purr-fect for pet lovers

◀ Your furry friend will spend hours being entertained by this pop-up tunnel

Pop-up play tunnel, £12, Pets at Home

▼ Ideal for home lovers, this wooden tray with gorgeous candle light glow would make a great centrepiece

Tea light holders on wooden tray, £16.99, Dobbies

▲ Give someone the gift of extra TV content without a subscription with a NOW TV box – available in limited edition designs for Christmas

NOW TV limited edition boxes, £15 (monthly passes cost extra), www.nowtv.com/christmasbox

Fab for food lovers

▶ Nigella's brand new book is full of uncomplicated and satisfying recipes to inspire any foodie

Simply Nigella: Feel Good Food, from around £13, Amazon

▲ Young children can copy mum and dad with their very own toy DIY tool belt

Personalised toy tool belt with tools, from around £25, Notonthehighstreet

▲ This salt pig would make a great addition to any keen cook's kitchen

Pride of Place salt jar, £14,99, T&G Woodware

▶ Fans of flavoured gin will love this tasty tipple

Spiced clementine gin, £13, M&S

▲ This golden cacao pod tin is filled with indulgent sea salt caramel pearls – perfect for a chocolate connoisseur

The Golden Pod, from around £12.99, Willie's Cacao

A treat for choco-holics

◀ This kit comes packaged in a stylish tin and contains useful tools for bicycle repairs

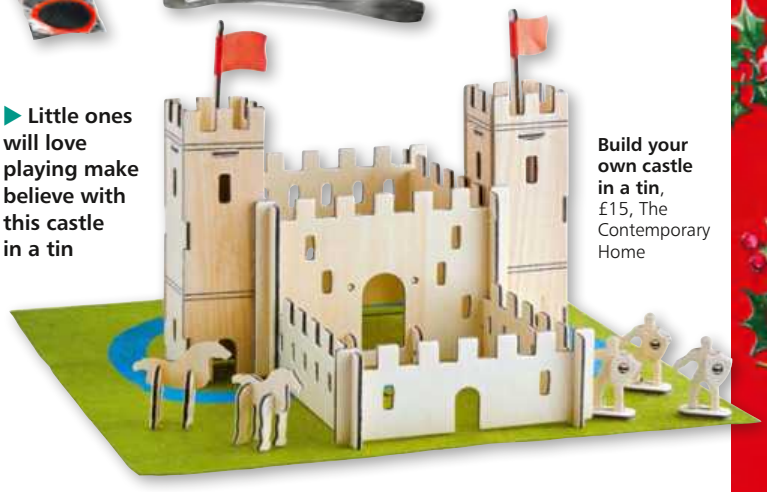
Ted Baker bike repair kit, £19.95, Wild & Wolf

▼ Anyone with a library of books would appreciate these wise old owl bookends

Wooden owl bookends, £21, The Contemporary Home

Perfect for a book-worm

▶ Little ones will love playing make believe with this castle in a tin



Build your own castle in a tin, £15, The Contemporary Home

£50 and under

One for all the family

◀ A great gift for a family, this pretty tin is full of beautifully-iced biscuits

Apres ski collection, £39.50, Biscuiteers

▲ Encourage their competitive spirit with a personalised table top football set

Personalised table top football game, from £30, Notonthehighstreet

◀ Give a gift that's bang-on-trend with this geometric terrarium

Hanging gold and glass terrarium, £32, Oliver Bonas

◀ Treat a loved one with this beautifully packaged box full of gourmet goodies

Bauble hamper box, £29.99, Lakeland

Great for a gardener

▲ Not only does this print make a fabulous piece of wall art, but the recipient will know exactly when to sow and plant all sorts of crops

Grow your own calendar, £45 (unframed), Bold & Noble

▼ A great gift for those with green fingers and a taste for a tipple – the set includes a 35cl bottle of sloe gin, a young sloe bush and a fruiting calamondin

Sloe gin gift set, £45, Plants4 Presents

▶ A designer corkscrew is the perfect gift for any host

Alessi parrot sommelier corkscrew, £36, House of Fraser

▼ This fancy gift box is filled with delicious foil-wrapped gianduiotti hazelnut chocolates, as well as a bottle of Prosecco

Prosecco e Gianduiotti gift set, £26.95, Carluccio's

Brilliant for bakers

▲ Help someone perfect their macarons – this kit contains a book, piping bags, two ingredients and a pretty tea towel

Mad about Macarons gift set, £29.50, Sous Chef

▼ A radio fan can listen in style with this fantastic design

Aston DAB/FM radio in teal, £39.95, John Lewis

Great for little ones

▶ Children will love whizzing around on this fire engine on Christmas morning

Ride on fire engine, £45, John Lewis

◀ A keen globetrotter can pinpoint their travels on this cork globe

Mini cork globe, £40, Suck UK

▼ Dog lovers will adore this draught excluder to help keep out the chill this winter

Sausage dog draught excluder, £40, Cath Kidston

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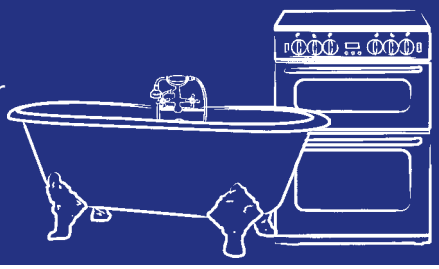


Image Very

Trend: Wintry lodge

Even if your home is anything but rural, you can still transform your kitchen into a wilderness lodge with this trend that marries sturdy wood with luxurious faux furs. Unfussy, solid wood dining furniture and kitchen worktops are both hard-wearing and stylish and will last through the seasons, and trends, to come. Industrial-look lighting works well in the kitchen, especially hung above the dining table to make a statement, so invest in some metal shades or pendant lights. When it comes to fabrics, it's all about the faux fur if you really want to re-create the lodge look. It might not be the most practical fabric for those of you who have a separate kitchen, but for open-plan kitchen and living areas a faux fur rug or cushions will add a touch of luxury that's perfect for crisp winter days.

Cheers!

Make your Christmas Day buck's fizz taste even better with these adorably-kitsch Champagne flutes from Cath Kidston. The colourful glasses feature an illustration of a Christmas fair, complete with a carousel, helter skelter and Cath's very own dog, Billie, making a guest appearance. Buy enough for everyone to toast with at the dinner table or just treat you and your loved one to a glass of their favourite cocktail on Christmas Eve.

Christmas Champagne glasses, £15 for two, Cath Kidston

Revamp with retro

Update your kitchen worktop in time for the festivities with the new range of retro-inspired kitchenware from Swan. Available in five colours, including this fabulous ruby red, the collection is perfect for lovers of all things retro. As well as must-have accessories such as these storage canisters and bread bin, Swan has also launched a range of pans to complement the countertop pieces. If you're anything like us and love a co-ordinated kitchen, you'll be adding the entire range to your Christmas list.

Swan Retro storage canisters, £59.99 for three; **bread bin**, £59.99, both available at www.very.co.uk

Feature Laura McLeish

Extra fluffy towels

No doubt you'll need to buy a few new hand towels if you have guests staying over Christmas, so take our advice and get these super cute ones from Bhs. There are two photographic designs, one featuring young deer and the other featuring a couple of baby penguins – both guaranteed to turn your bathroom into a winter wonderland.

Penguin hand towel, £8; **deer towel**, £8; **knitted baskets**, £22 for two; **animal shimmer bath mat**, £18, all Bhs

VISIT WWW.YOURHOMEMAGAZINE.CO.UK FOR MORE KITCHEN & BATHROOM INSPIRATION

We had to fix things before

A part-completed kitchen could have caused Janette Roberts problems if she

Insider info

WHO LIVES HERE?
Janette Roberts, 62, a part-time banker lives in a two-bedroom cottage in Amersham, Buckinghamshire, that she bought in 2014.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT THE ROOM NOW?
'It feels beautifully finished with lots of lovely details, and the cosy cottage-style makes it my dream kitchen.'

DO YOU HAVE ANY TIPS?
'If you plan to add anything to the kitchen ask the previous owners where it came from originally, then you can buy extra cupboards or accessories easily.'

WHAT WAS WRONG WITH THE OLD ROOM?
The kitchen had been fitted by the previous owner, but not completed, and things were becoming damaged.

Before

When Janette Roberts moved to her two-bedroom cottage in Amersham, the previous owners had done lots of work around the property, but there was a common problem too – nothing had been quite finished off. Janette loved the pretty cream wood Howdens kitchen, but there was cornice missing on the wall units that made the room look unbalanced, and there was an issue with the sink area too. 'There was a tiny circular sink with little separate circle drainer next to it and the wood in-between the two had so much water on it, that it was black and rotting. The oak work surfaces all around hadn't been oiled and were in a terrible state too. The walls were marked, greasy and water-stained and on closer inspection it was all looking a bit shabby. I hated the worn brown floor tiles too so the kitchen felt like it could be wonderful, but it wasn't!' she explains.

Keen to deal with the problems before they caused lasting damage, Janette called on the services of her son-in-law Andy. 'He's amazing at DIY and offered to help me get the kitchen sorted. He said we needed to cut out the rotten wood by the sink and fit a larger one in the space so I chose my dream white ceramic style – it's what I've always wanted and when he

FINISH WHAT'S BEEN STARTED
Janette was able to buy new cornice for the top of the cupboards, and a door to integrate the dishwasher to match the Howdens kitchen making the room look neat and finished off.

LAY NEW FLOORING
The vinyl floor from Quick-Step looks like wood but has all the easy-maintenance properties of vinyl and is softer underfoot than tiles.

Feature Becky Clarke Photos Rachael Smith

problems got worse

hadn't acted swiftly

ADD FROSTED FILM

Frosted film panels conceal the contents of the glass-fronted cabinets and the quirky central design adds a touch of fun.

ADD A BREAKFAST BAR

Janette created a wonderful seating area by cutting a length of matching worktop to size and adding stools underneath that she painted to match the tiles. The wall-hung design gives a generous area for breakfast without encroaching too much on the room.

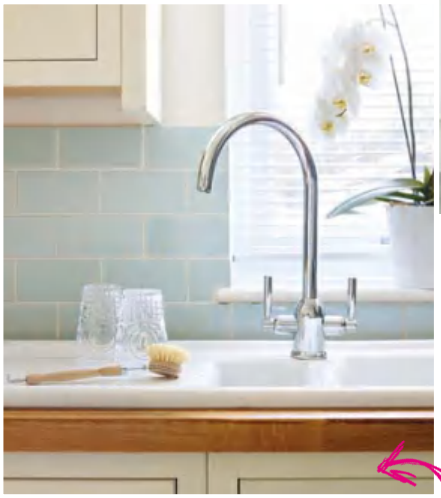
KEEP FRESH HERBS

A hanging rail with pots mean fresh herbs are always at hand for delicious recipes without cluttering the worktop or windowsill.

fitted it, he sanded and oiled all the worktops too. So now they look brand new and I'm thrilled. I chose duck egg blue brick tiles as a soft contrast to the cream units to protect the walls and we fitted them over a weekend,' she says. Janette then made a trip to Howdens. 'I'd asked the previous owners for all the details of the kitchen they'd fitted and luckily it was still in stock so I was delighted to be able to get some cornice, and also a matching door so I could have an integrated dishwasher to fit in the gap. Being able to match exactly meant I could finish the kitchen off properly and it looks so much better,' Janette smiles.

At this point the room's main problems had been addressed and it had the cosy cottage feel Janette wanted, but the floor tiles were still an issue for her. 'I hated them, but I couldn't face the hassle of taking them up to replace them. Andy suggested that as they were sound and level, I could lay new vinyl over the top and get the wooden style I wanted. I didn't realise this was possible, but once Andy had worked his magic laying a grey washed plank from Quick-Step I was absolutely thrilled as it made all the difference with the room feeling lighter and brighter.'

To give her somewhere to sit and have a cup of tea, Janette had a small bistro table on one side of the room, but it wasn't as practical as she'd hoped. 'It took up quite a lot of space and was an obstacle to walk around. I solved this issue by finding a beautiful oak worktop at Worktop Express that matches the others perfectly and we created a breakfast bar – it's a brilliant solution. It's wall hung so the floor underneath is uncluttered and easy to clean, and it's the right size to sit at. Now the room feels perfectly finished and I won't get any problems in the future,' Janette smiles.



REMOVE ROTTEN WOOD

The new 1.5 bowl sink is a practical solution in a busy kitchen and the ceramic finish with swan neck tap oozes country charm. Pretty tiles give the walls protection from splashes.

ALL IN THE DETAILS

The dresser unit offers fantastic storage and has now been finished off with tiled walls, and a wooden worktop that has been sanded and oiled to give it a new lease of life.

SHOPPING LIST

Oak worktop, 2m x 620mm x 40mm, £100, Worktop Express. **Solaris 150 ceramic sink**, £306; **Dante tap**, £203, both Carron Phoenix. **Tewkesbury white cornice**, £153.25 each; **Tewkesbury dishwasher door**, £108, both Howdens. **Livyn vinyl Canyon oak grey flooring with saw cuts**, £26.99 per sq m, Quick-Step. **Fizz Crackle Brick wall tile**, £45.32 per sq m, The Tile Depot. **Stools painted in: Valspar Premium spray paint in Wildlife**, £12.83 per 400ml can, B&Q. **Blackboard**, £16.95, eBay. **Jones Apollo clock**, £30, Debenhams. **Plain frosted film, 1.2m x 0.5m**, £19; **'Kiss the Cook' frosted film**, from £26 made-to-measure, both Brume.

TOTAL COST: £1,679.96

Opt for a wood-effect floor which will help to keep costs down while achieving a realistic wood effect

Livyn Patina Oak Natural, £26.99 per sq m, quick-step.co.uk

▲ **Available in ten colours, these scales feature a large stainless steel measuring bowl that has a capacity of 4kg and is dishwasher-safe for easy cleaning**

Retro scales with clock, £59.95, Wesco

YH handy hint

Consider different options for storage within a country kitchen scheme. Wicker baskets work well, and you may be able to incorporate a selection of these into your kitchen design in a drawer system. A wall of open shelving will look great as well as providing the perfect place to display treasured crockery. Add a ceiling-mounted, hanging rack to keep pans on show as well as saving on cupboard space.

Fill your kitchen with rustic charm

Give the heart of your home a warm, country feel with the latest farmhouse-style buys

Feature Lisa Hibberd

As the heart of the home, your kitchen should be a warm, welcoming place which is a pleasure, rather than a chore, to spend time in. You don't have to have a large space to achieve this look, in fact it can work just as well in a smaller room. If your existing cabinets are in good condition, simply give them a coat of paint for an instant update. A tiled or wood floor is a great base for this scheme, but opt for a stone or wood-effect vinyl if you're on a limited budget. Accessories are key to getting this look right – choose rustic woven baskets and stylish glass jars as the perfect finishing touches.

These rustic-look tiles have a glossy finish and are available in a choice of ten colours

Cotswold tiles, from £46.99 per sq m, Tile Giant

▶ This smart bin will ensure that bread stays fresh as well as looking stylish on your worktop

Bread bin in Pebble, £28, Garden Trading

◀ The addition of some farm animal-themed accessories will help to introduce a farmhouse feel

Cockerel topped jar, £3, Sabichi

A range oven is the ultimate in country kitchen chic – the Classic Deluxe from Rangemaster offers a five-burner gas hob, a glide-out grill and a fully-programmable 69-litre, eight-function oven, but there are also less pricey designs available

Classic Deluxe 100, around £1,900, Rangemaster

Add a splash of colour with painted cabinets and a vibrant blind – we love this hot pink design

Roller blind in Bella Lollipop, from £64 for a 61cm x 61cm size, The Fabric Box

▼ Co-ordinate your kitchen with Swan's great range of colourful accessories

Retro frying pans, £49.99 for two; **retro kitchen towel pole**, £21.99; **retro mug tree**, £24.99, all Swan

▲ **A set of cast-iron dishes is a must for any country kitchen – we love Sainsbury's range of designs in a rich shade of purple**

Sainsbury's Collection purple casserole dishes, from £30 each, Sainsbury's

▶ **Old-fashioned storage tins will sit perfectly with this look**

McDougall's flour tin, £15; **flour sifter**, £9, both The Contemporary Home

▲ **Store frequently-used ingredients in jars for ease of use as well as an attractive display**

Square storage jars, from £3.50; **Cornbury cookie jar**, £12.50; **kitchen scales**, £36; **Cornbury butter dish**, £15.50; **egg tray**, £12; **pestle and mortar**, £15, all Garden Trading

These classic kitchen cabinets, shown here in Oyster, have a rustic, country style that will never date

Victoria kitchen, from £162 per 600mm base unit, Crown Imperial

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My cramped bathroom

What first appeared an impossible challenge, Johanna Curwood managed to

Insider info

WHO LIVES HERE?

Johanna Curwood, 30, is a project manager and lives here with her husband Ben and daughter Luna, two. They bought this two-bedroom, 1930s flat in Wandsworth 14 months ago.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT THE ROOM?

'I love the mosaic tiles. Although they were quite pricey, I didn't need too many and the room has really benefited from some bling!'

WHAT ARE YOUR TOP TIPS?

'The walls may not be straight or flat so prepare them well and level your surfaces to get a clean and professional finish.'

WHAT DID YOU LEARN DURING THE PROJECT?

'Don't give up before you've studied all the options. Ben and I almost didn't buy this flat because of the bathroom, but we've managed to turn it around and create our own miniature spa.'

WHAT WAS WRONG WITH THE OLD ROOM?

The room had no window so it was very dark, but it was also tiny with broken taps and shower and no WC either.

Before

DOUBLE THE SPACE

Using a large cut-to-size piece of mirror on one wall can open up the space making it appear twice as big. The mirror will also reflect the light creating a brighter room too, exactly what is needed.

LOOK FOR SLIMLINE PRODUCTS

This slimline combination unit from Better Bathrooms houses a back-to-wall WC and a compact basin with storage underneath. Johanna even found a shorter than normal bath to squeeze into the space too and added a stylish shower positioned above.

Feature Emma Fishman **Photos** Lizzie Orme

was so dark before

transform this dark and dingy space into a smart bathroom

While viewing her flat in Wandsworth in south London, Johanna Curwood, 31, and her husband Ben, wandered into a pitch black room, thinking it was just a cupboard. 'We couldn't believe it when the estate agent walked in behind us describing it as the bathroom!' she laughs. 'I had to use the torch on my phone to see around the room. With a small stream of light, I could see that it was lacking in any redeeming features. It was the most depressing bathroom I had ever seen. Not only was it dirty, the taps didn't work, the shower was broken, the toilet was missing and there was no light at all. It was so dark and extremely small.' After being shown around the rest of the flat, the estate agent explained how, with a few good ideas, the bathroom could be totally transformed. In fact he showed Johanna and Ben, how they could also squeeze in the WC too. 'The room was so cramped – it was almost unimaginable that we could actually add a toilet in there too.' On their second visit, with torch and a tape measure on board, Johanna and Ben were able to think hard and came up with a few solutions. 'We would have to buy a shorter than standard bath, a slimline toilet and basin then add lots of shiny white tiles to make it feel as bright as possible,' she says. Johanna chose some shimmery mosaic tiles for one wall to create a feature and then looked online at Better Bathrooms to find some products to fit her measurements. 'I loved the smart combination unit which housed a back-to-wall WC and a small basin. The bath had to be 1600mm in length and I chose a double-ended version so the taps could be central, making it feel more comfortable.' Johanna also had a large mirror cut to make the room feel double the space. 'It feels like a miracle to see the bathroom now. To think I almost didn't buy this flat, I'm so glad I did. My bathroom may be small, but now it's perfectly formed,' laughs Johanna.

FINER DETAILS

Smart new taps give the room a designer feel and positioning them in the centre of the bath makes for a more comfortable bathing experience. A matching tap is fitted at the basin too.

ADD A LUXURY FEEL

Johanna felt the room really needed some TLC so she chose some shimmering mosaic tiles from House of British Ceramic Tile to create a stunning feature wall by the bath. Large high gloss tiles go on the floor to make the room sparkle even more.

POWER SHOWER

A large shower from Mira almost makes up for the lack of space in the room. Having a fixed shower head provides a good drenching while the adjustable hand held section offers more showering options. A clear glass shower screen looks invisible giving the room a clean finish.

WARM & COSY

A shiny chrome towel radiator from Hudson Reed keeps the room, as well as the towels, warm and toasty through the winter months. Johanna found an especially narrow design to fit the space by the bath.

SHOPPING LIST

Feature wall tiles: BCT38368 Mosaics Shades of Grey white linear glass stone mix mosaic, £119 per sq m; **wall tiles: Trace by Studio Conran Tactile Hartland white pressed mosaic**, £30 per sq m; **floor tile: Fabulous Sublime White**, £62 per sq m, all House of British Ceramic Tile. **1600mm x 700mm double ended Tabor bath**, £149.95; **Cuba left-hand combination unit**, £349.95, both Better Bathrooms. **Adept BRD+ shower**, £564; **Evolve basin monobloc mixer**, £140; **Evolve bath pillar taps**, £145, all Mira. **Eton towel rail**, £267, Hudson Reed. **Toilet roll holder**, £8.50; **glass shelf**, £53, both Brabantia. **Mirror cut-to-size**, £60, Metropolitan Glass & Glazing. **Crochet trim towels**, from £12; **Coco towels**, from £6, all Laura Ashley.

TOTAL COST £2,518

Relax and unwind in a spathroom

Ensure that your bathroom is a calming retreat with some of our favourite buys

There's nothing nicer than a long soak in the bath or a relaxing shower after a busy day – although today's bathrooms are more often than not just a place which we rush in and out of every morning and evening. We've gathered together some of our favourite buys which will help to transform yours from a purely functional space into one that's the perfect retreat from the stresses of daily life.

You don't have to stick to neutral colours – add a splash of vibrant red with these gorgeous towels

Lindsey Lang leaf cotton towels in red, from £3.50 for a face cloth, John Lewis

Go for a rustic theme by introducing a wooden shelf, which will provide the perfect place to store essential items

Simplicity framed print, £24.99; **lotion dispenser**, £4.99; **tumbler**, £2.99; **Egyptian cotton hand towel**, £4.99; **ceramic jug**, £17.99, all Dunelm

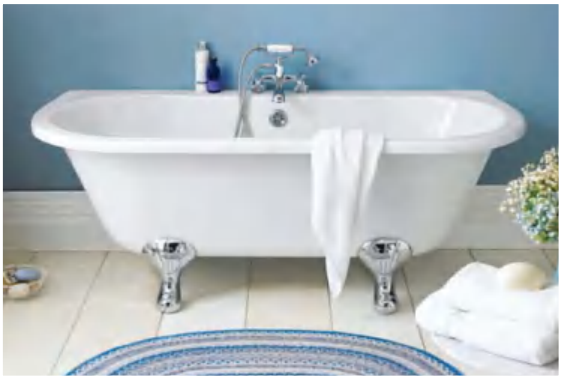
Storage is essential for a calming, clutter-free space. We love John Lewis' range of solutions, which includes these smart bamboo designs

House by John Lewis bamboo five-tier bathroom shelf, £69; **House by John Lewis bamboo corner shelf unit**, £25, both John Lewis

A tile-effect floor in grey will work well with most colour schemes

Supercomforts Quartz cushion floor, £24 per sq m, Leoline

If you don't have the floor space to site a roll-top bath in the centre of your bathroom, consider this design which fits snugly against a wall



Back-to-wall double-ended free-standing bath, from around £389, Matalan Direct

Feature Lisa Hibberd

A set of co-ordinating accessories will smarten up your basin area

Pretty vintage lotion dispenser, £6.99; **pretty vintage tumbler**, £3.99; **bird ornament**, £2.99, all Dunelm

Simple yet sophisticated, these marble accessories will look stunning in a spa-inspired scheme

Marble tumbler, £15; **marble soap dispenser**, £20; **marble canister**, £20, all House of Fraser

Keep essentials tucked away in a set of pretty baskets

Storage baskets, £40 for two, Gray and Willow at House of Fraser

Designed to replicate natural marble, these stunning tiles will give a look of luxury for less

Roundhay grey ceramic tiles, £19.20 per sq m, Tile Giant

Display towels on a ladder for style as well as storage

Large laundry bag, £15; **solid wood mirror shelf**, £22; **solid wood ladder towel store**, £45; **ochre striped towel**, from £6; **ochre striped bath mat**, £14; **solid wood toilet roll stacker**, £20, all Next

If you don't have the space for a bath, install a luxurious shower enclosure instead. We love this quadrant design which offers plenty of space as well as stylish good looks

Energy collection es400 offset quadrant shower enclosure, from around £637, Twyford

Keep things simple with light, bright colours and a sleek basin unit

Godmorgon/Aldern/Tornviken wash stand with countertop wash basin, from £255; **Storjorm mirror with lighting**, £55; **Rimforsa tablet stand in bamboo**, all Ikea

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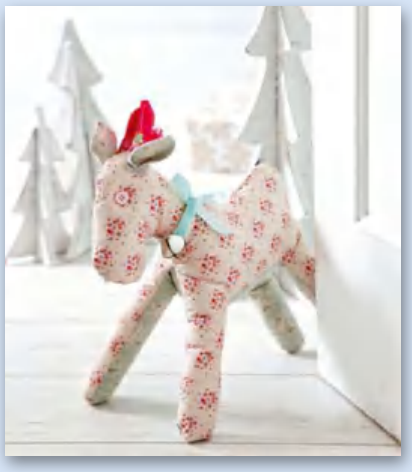
Make it easy!

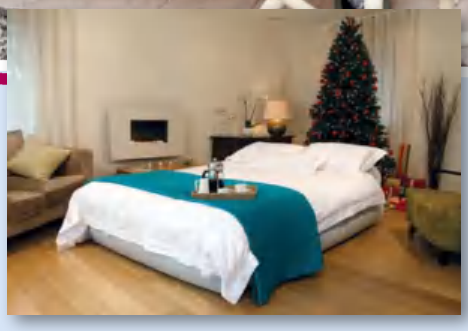
We're in full-on Christmas prep mode this month, getting ready for winter and all the festive fun that follows. Turn to page 60 for a set of cool table decorations to make, then stitch your own reindeer doorstop with our guide on page 64. This, plus fab storage ideas, our essential December checklist, and more.

Discover how to upgrade a storage unit

Create cute winter-themed table decorations



Stitch a vintage-style reindeer doorstop



Get winter-ready with our checklist

Illuminate your kitchen with our expert advice

Make, do & craft

Add a wintry feel to your table with these alpine decoration ideas

Mini gold bristle tree decorations, £3.50 each, Gisela Graham

Top tip

Knit a mini scarf for your snowman to give him an extra-festive handmade touch.

Soft snowman

This fuzzy fellow will delight your guests both young and old

SHOPPING LIST

- white, orange and black wool tops
- scrap piece of upholstery foam
- felting needle tool and felting needles
- one brown pipe cleaner
- mini knitted scarf (optional)

1 Begin by forming the body and the head. Ball up a length of white felting wool until it is slightly larger than your fist. Place it onto the foam, and using the felting tool, prick it all over repeatedly, turning it around gradually and continuing to poke it to felt the fibres together. Continue until you have created a solid ball with a smooth surface – this is the body. Repeat to make a slightly smaller ball for the head.

2 Hold the head and the body together in position. Using a diagonal stabbing motion, prick through the join between the two, working it over and over again until they felt together. It may take some time to do this, but the more you stab it with the needles the firmer the hold will be.

3 Add the details. Pull off several pea-sized amounts of black wool and roll them into balls. Felt these into place on the face to create eyes, and onto the body to make buttons. Pull off a 50p sized piece of orange wool and roll it between your fingers to make a conical shape. Lightly felt all over, rolling it back and forth every so often to make a carrot. Felt this onto the front of the face, below the eyes. Finally, make two arms by trimming down a brown pipe cleaner, and felt these into place on either side of the body, adding small amounts of white felt around the base of each to hold them in place.

Feature and styling Sophie Holt **Photos** Lizzie Orme

Reindeer salt and pepper set, £6, The Contemporary Home

Clay tree lantern

Add a sophisticated sparkle with these pierced white tree-shaped ornaments

SHOPPING LIST

- Fimo soft polymer clay
- rolling pin
- polystyrene cone
- cling film
- craft knife
- large nail
- oven
- LED tea light

1 On a clean, smooth surface, roll out the Fimo block until it is around 3mm thick. Stand the polystyrene cone upright and place a layer of cling film over it, smoothing it down. Carefully wrap the Fimo clay around the cone, smoothing it down and cutting away any excess. Smooth across the join until it disappears. Cut across the bottom of the clay to straighten it up.

2 Make the holes in the tree. Use a large nail to poke holes through the clay and into the foam beneath. Once finished, carefully pull the clay tree from the mould, using the cling film to ease it away. Once they are apart, slowly peel away the cling film and stand the tree upright on a baking tray.

3 Use the nail to open each of the holes up a little and ensure they are clear and go all the way through. Finally, make a small star from a scrap of Fimo, and form it onto the top of the tree. Bake the clay to harden, following the manufacturer's instructions. Once cooled, place an LED tea light inside to illuminate the design.

Top tip

Make several trees in differing sizes to create an enchanted forest display.

Illuminated houses

Add a little ambience with these mini felt chalets

SHOPPING LIST

- A4 sheet white felt
- heavyweight fusible interfacing
- pen
- scissors
- embroidery thread and needle
- red and white pipe cleaners
- hot glue gun
- cream paper
- LED tea light

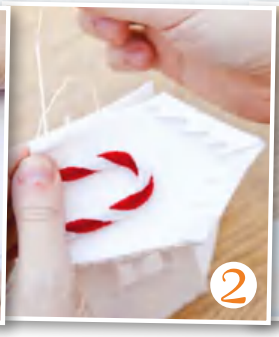
Top tip

These houses could also be made from card or paper and glued together instead for a quicker finish.

1 Back the white felt with fusible interfacing, using a medium iron. Download and print the Felt House templates from www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk or send a stamped SAE to Your Home December Felt House templates, HBM UK, The Tower, Phoenix Square, Colchester, Essex, CO4 9HU. Use them to draw and cut the various pieces from the felt. Cut the square windows from the sides, then cut and stick strips across the hole, and around it, to form a bordered window.

2 Twist the red and white pipe cleaners together, then trim and bend into a door shape. Use hot glue to stick to the front of the house. Glue the icicles along the top edge of the front and back pieces. Using an embroidery needle and thread, blanket stitch the pieces together along the side edges to form the house.

3 Make the roof. Cut the main roof piece from card and bend in the middle as indicated. Cut eight roof tile pieces from cream paper, and glue them to the main roof, overlapping them to create the 'tiled' effect. Cut 12 mini hearts from white felt and glue them along the bottom of the tiles, to decorate. Place an LED tea light inside each house, then place the roof on top of the house to finish.



Furniture facelift

Upgrade standard storage with these handy ideas

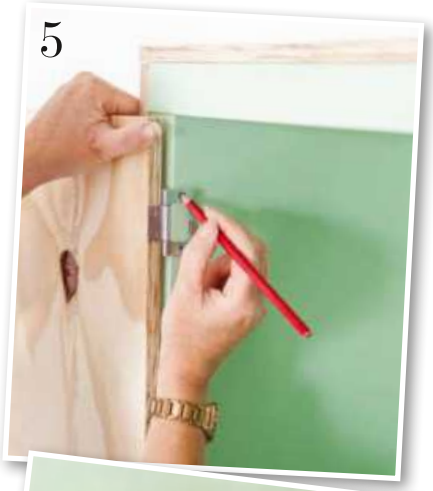
This month we've upcycled a simple shelf unit from Ikea. We loved the size and colour of the unit but wanted to upgrade the storage to accommodate a host of laundry and utility items. We hung one full-length door and two smaller doors to hide unattractive but essential everyday items. We also added an elastic-covered board as a great way to add storage – it's both practical and funky.

You will need

✓Kallax shelving unit, £55, Ikea ✓tape measure ✓pencil ✓one large sheet of 12mm deep shuttering plywood ✓hand or electric saw ✓sand paper ✓damp cloth ✓contact adhesive ✓electric drill and drill bit ✓screws ✓screwdriver ✓four rubber swivel braked tyre castor wheels, £18.99 per set of four, Screwfix ✓eight 50mm flush hinges, £1.72 per pair, local timber yard ✓white and green emulsion paint ✓paint brush ✓masking tape ✓three brushed nickel-effect handles, £7 per pair, B&Q ✓white cup hooks, £3.78 per pack of 25, B&Q ✓5m white shock elastic, 80p per m, B&Q

Before

2



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7

8

1 Assemble the shelving unit according to the instructions, then measure and cut the wood to fit around the outside – make sure to allow for the thickness of the wood when you work out the measurements. Our wood was 12mm deep, so we cut two 1477mm x 390mm pieces for the sides and two 790mm x 390mm pieces for the top and bottom. Sand the edges and then wipe clean.

2 Glue and then screw the wood panels onto the outside of the unit. Start with the bottom, then add the sides and finally attach the top piece. The screw heads will remain visible on the finished item as part of the industrial look.

3 Attach a castor at each corner of the base. Pre-drill the holes and then screw in place, ensuring that the screws pass through the plywood and into the painted fibreboard. Turn the unit right side up and lock the wheels.

4 For the two smaller doors, measure and cut two pieces of plywood to 343mm wide x 335mm high. Next, measure and cut the plywood for the larger single door to 343mm wide x 1390mm high. Sand the sawn edges smooth and then wipe clean.

5 Screw a pair of hinges to one side of each of the two smaller doors. Hold each door in place with the hinge in an open position; mark the placement of the screws inside each cupboard with a pencil, then remove the door. Drill pilot holes and then screw the doors to the shelf unit. The unit is made from painted fibreboard so use a small, sharp drill bit to prevent the surface cracking. Repeat to attach the tall door using four hinges, one inside each cupboard 'hole'.

6 Dilute one part white emulsion paint with five parts water in a bowl and mix together. Paint the wood with this mixture and leave to dry.

7 Add a green striped design. Stick two vertical strips of masking tape, 1cm apart, on the front of each door. Position each stripe approximately 6cm in from the centre of the cupboard. Press the tape down firmly to prevent the paint seeping beneath it. Lightly coat with green paint, then once dry, remove the tape.

8 Drill and screw the handles in place on each door. Screw one hook at each corner of the tall single door, 1cm in from the edge. Add several more hooks at random intervals around the edge of the door, keeping them 1cm in from the outside edge for a uniform look. Hook the elastic through the vine eyes, across the door, to create a random crisscross pattern.

Feature Jo Rigg **Photos** Lizzie Orme

White metal laundry bin, £72; **pastel mint hanging laundry bag**, £27.75; **hangers**, £5.95 per pack of three, all Brabantia. **Skubb storage box**, £10; **Tekla tea towels**, 35p each; **Socker metal vase**, £10 per pair; **Skogsta wooden box with handle**, £10; **Bolman hand towels**, £3.50 each; **Bolman washcloth**, £1.50 each; **Tomat water spray**, 80p; **Raskog cream stool**, £15; **Nordis rug**, £70, all Ikea

Top tip

Furniture makeovers don't always need to start with a second-hand or vintage item, new furniture is just as much fun to rework and upcycle.

Sew simple

Create a doorstop with a difference with this fun reindeer design

You will need

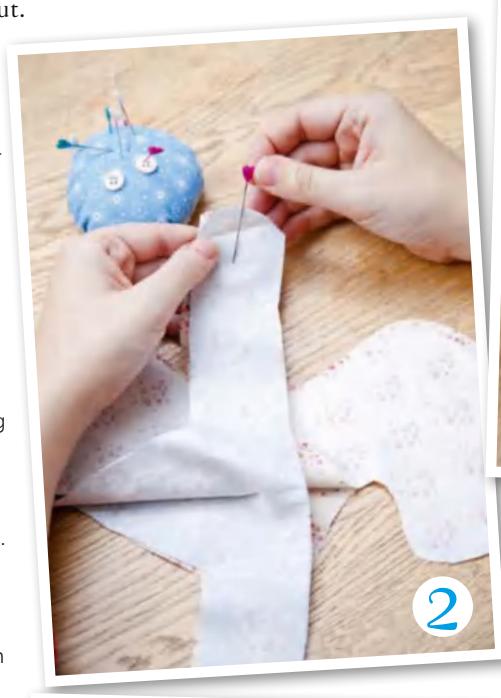
- 50cm each of Tilda Bird Mist cotton and Tilda Jean Dove White cotton, plus scraps of Tilda Emma Red Fabric, all £15.80 per m, Puddle Crafts
- pencil
- scissors
- iron
- pins
- sewing machine
- thread
- funnel
- rice
- toy stuffing
- needle
- two small buttons
- 30cm ribbon
- bell

With guests coming and going and everyone rushing around the house, Christmas is a particularly busy time of year in any home. Prop your doors open with this cute vintage-style reindeer doorstop, made from soft cotton and stuffed with rice to ensure he stays put.

1 Download and print the Reindeer Doorstop templates from www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk or send a stamped SAE to Your Home December Reindeer Doorstop templates, HBM UK, The Tower, Phoenix Square, Colchester, Essex, CO4 9HU. Use it to cut out two main body pieces (one reversed) from one cotton print, and one belly piece from another. Press them with a warm iron.

2 Fold the belly piece in half lengthways, right-sides facing. Lay one of the main body pieces out flat, with right-side facing up. Place one half of the belly piece on top, aligning the legs of both. Pin together. Keeping the belly piece folded, place the second main body piece on top, aligning the legs once again.

3 Using a straight machine stitch, sew around the edge of the pieces to join the belly to the main body, leaving a 5mm seam allowance. Leave a 10cm gap in one seam – we left ours towards the back of the reindeer to keep it hidden. Turn through, and press.



4 Using a funnel, pour rice into each leg until it is around ¾ full. This will add weight to your doorstop and keep it grounded. Fill the rest of the legs, head and body with toy stuffing, poking it with a pencil repeatedly to ensure it fills all the space firmly.

5 Once stuffed, mould the reindeer into shape to ensure the stuffing is evenly distributed. Finally, hand stitch the gap in the seam closed with a needle and thread.

6 Using the templates, cut four ear pieces from a scrap of cotton (two reversed). Pin them together in pairs, with right-sides facing outwards, and machine stitch all around the edge, leaving a seam allowance of 3mm. Fold the two corners along the bottom of each ear into the centre and stitch across, to hold them in position. Hand stitch onto either side of the head.

7 Cut four antler templates from a scrap of red cotton, and as above, pin them together in pairs with right-sides facing outwards. Machine stitch around the edge of each, leaving a 3mm seam allowance. Stitch to the top of the head, slightly in from each ear.

8 Finally, add eyes. Draw a small dot on either side of the face to denote their position, then hand stitch a button to each one. Add a ribbon and bell round the neck for extra decoration.

Feature and styling Sophie Holt **Photos** Lizzie Orme

Standing wood trees, £36.99
for three, Retreat Home

Top tip

To make the doorstop heavier simply add more rice – or add less if you would prefer to create a purely decorative reindeer instead of a doorstop.

Girls' Guide to DIY

Dress your windows with our simple guide to fitting curtain poles and tracks

Putting up a curtain pole

1 Work out how far the pole will reach beyond the window recess each side and mark the point with a pencil. Measure 25mm in and 50mm up from this point – this will be where the fixing boss will sit. Note that for curtain poles, these should be at least 50mm from the recess. Hold the fixing boss over the mark and use a pencil to mark the screw positions. Check for cables then drill the holes, insert wall plugs and screw the bosses into place.

2 Fit the decorative wall brackets over the boss and secure with a screw. Assemble the pole and slide it through the two brackets. If your pole comes with curtain rings, leave one curtain ring on the outside of each bracket. Tighten the retaining screw on each fixing boss and push the finials onto the ends of the pole.

Feature Laura McLeish **Step-by-step images** B&Q's You Can Do It Manual **Main image** Laura Ashley

Putting up a curtain track

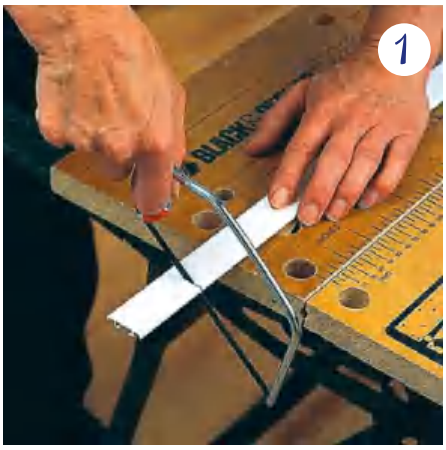
1 The track should be long enough for your curtains to draw without a gap, so decide on your length and cut the track using a fine-tooth hacksaw. Ensure the edge is smooth by filing or removing burrs with a craft knife.

2 As with a pole, you'll need to work out how far the track will reach beyond the window recess each side. Use a ruler to extend the top line of the recess by this amount with a pencil. Measure 25mm in and 50mm up from this point – this will be the position of the end bracket. Mark the other fixing positions at equal intervals between the two end brackets, measuring 50mm up from the top of the window recess each time so the marks are in a straight line.

3 Check at each fixing position that there are no hidden pipes or cables. You can pick up an electronic detector at most DIY stores. If all is clear, drill the fixing holes and insert wall plugs that are the right size for your screws.

4 Screw the mounting clips into position, following the manufacturer's instructions. The bracket latches that the track fits to need to be facing forward. To fit the end stops, slip one over each end of the track and tighten the retaining screws.

5 Place the track into the slot in one of the end brackets. Push the bracket latch until you hear a click. Clip the rest of the track into place in the same way, going from one end to the other.



Toolbox treat

You'll need a long and sturdy ruler to make sure the curtain pole or track sits at exactly the right position above the window recess. This one is made from aluminium and has both imperial and metric units, so you can be sure that your measuring is accurate.

40 inch ruler, £7.42, B&Q

Fitting a curtain pole in a bay window

We spoke to Garry Bailey, Technical Engineer at window dressing expert, Swish, to get advice on fitting a curtain pole in a bay window…

● How do you measure a curtain pole for a bay window?
To calculate the length of pole needed for a bay, simply measure the total width of the window and add 30cm, to allow 15cm either side for the curtains to stack back. Should you want a return finish, which comes out of the bay window and back towards the wall, you'll need to buy a special bay return kit.

● How do you make sure all of the pole joints are in the correct place?
This depends on the curtain pole being fitted and the size of the corner piece. Most corner pieces, including those on Swish's Design Studio pole, rest on top of the brackets. You'll need to fit the brackets either side of the corner first, making sure they're close enough together for the corner piece to rest on top.

The Swish Elements Belgravia Bay Pole is ideal for splayed-shaped bay windows as it has an elbow joint which sits at a central point between two brackets. Once you've fitted the brackets, you can angle the elbow joint and position it to fit the exact angle of your window. Excess pole length can then be measured and cut from the other end of the pole as needed.

ASK THE EXPERTS

We answer your DIY and maintenance questions with a little help from the experts

Q I'd like to update the radiator in my living room and have seen some lovely cast-iron schoolhouse-style designs – what do I need to consider?
Jane, West Yorkshire

A ***Grant Dixon, Head of Product and Strategy at The Radiator Company, has this advice...***

As with any radiator it is very important to ensure that your chosen design will provide you with an efficient amount of heat. By using the dimensions of your room you can find out the required BTU using a Heat Output Calculator and choose a radiator size, or more than one, to fulfil your heat requirements. Cast-iron radiators have an excellent benefit of retaining heat for longer than standard steel designs, meaning that once you have switched off the heating the radiator will continue to emit some heat stored inside.

Cast-iron is a heavy material, so it is highly advised to always use footed end sections or floor supports for your radiator. A range of floor support designs are available such as paw and cast feet, to match the look and design of your room.

When it comes to choosing the colour there are quite a few options available with cast-iron. They can even be bought in a primer finish allowing you to paint in your own colour with an appropriate oil-based paint.

Priory 3 column radiator painted in Pebble Grey, from around £378.70, The Radiator Company

Q I am planning a new kitchen and would like to incorporate some clever lighting. Do you have any top tips?
Mrs Doherty, Newport, South Wales

A ***Michael Wright of Michael Wright Kitchens, has this advice...***

- **Be practical. Consider spotlights or additional illumination around the most used surfaces.**
- **Identify the dark areas. Think about incorporating lighting inside cupboards too.**
- **Complement the kitchen. What colours and materials are your units and worktops? Dark surfaces may need extra light, while beware of glare on white and highly polished or gloss surfaces.**
- **Be energy-efficient. Be sure to check out the full range of energy-efficient lighting products to save money long term. Energy-efficient bulbs no longer mean gloomy, dim lighting.**
- **Go high-tech. Smart controls will allow you to adjust the lighting in any area at the touch of button via your smartphone. This remote control over your lighting can also provide a valuable security measure when you're away from home.**
- **Be sure to ask advice from your kitchen designer on what sort of lighting will work best with your kitchen.**

For more information visit www.michaelwrightfurniture.co.uk.

Q I've started to find moth holes in some of my favourite jumpers – what's the best way to keep them away?
Mrs Storey, Lincs

A ***Your Home says...***

You may be surprised to know that it's actually the larvae, not the moths that are responsible for the damage to your clothes. The common clothes moth, or Tineola bisselliella, has a life cycle of between 65 and 90 days, giving it plenty of time to lay around 50 eggs. By the time you notice adult moths flying around, the damage may already be done.

A clean home is the best place to start – moths don't like disturbance, so take out and rearrange everything in your cupboards once a month, shaking everything out. The same applies to carpets, make sure you move furniture regularly and vacuum thoroughly, especially underneath beds and wardrobes. Moths love dirty clothes, so don't put anything away unless it's been thoroughly washed. It's also a good idea to keep treasured items in sealed plastic bags. Moths love warm, dark conditions, so avoid using central heating in unused rooms, opening windows whenever possible to allow fresh air to circulate.

Different people recommend many different ways to ward off moths, including placing conkers or moth balls in the wardrobe, and putting clothes in sealed bags in the freezer to kill any eggs or larvae. Whichever method you try, there's no doubt that these pesky insects can be hard to get rid of.

Lakeland offers a good range of moth-proofing solutions, including wardrobe hangers, sachets and sprays. These latest products have a pleasant scent, and claim to stop moths in their tracks. If you have a serious infestation then it's best to call in the experts but this can be costly, so it's worth trying a few DIY solutions first.

Q I've just bought my first home, and am keen to start decorating but I am a complete beginner and worried about getting it wrong. Do you have any advice before I begin?
Clara, by email

A *Stuart Hobbs from Harris has these top tips...*

Always be prepared

To achieve a professional finish, good preparation is key. Remove what furniture you can from a room and protect everything else with dust sheets.

It's important to check that the surfaces you're planning to paint are in sound condition. Check any existing wallpaper, paint or varnish on your walls, window frames, doors and ceilings; Wallpaper or peeling paint should be stripped, nails or fixings should be removed from walls and any cracks and holes filled in.

Once the filler has dried, use sand paper to smooth the area. Make sure surfaces are clean, dry and free of any dust or dirt then use masking tape to cover and protect light switches, plug sockets and skirting boards.

The right tool for the right job

When choosing the perfect paint brush to use, it's worth considering whether to use a brush with synthetic filaments, natural bristles or a combination. Synthetic filament brushes such as the Harris Icon, No Loss or EasyClean are best for use with water-based emulsion and gloss paint. Natural bristle brushes, on the other hand, perform well with oil-based products.

Types of roller include short, medium and long pile. Short pile rollers perform best on flat surfaces such as newly-plastered walls where they will give a smooth, even finish. Medium pile should be used with previously painted or slightly uneven surfaces. Long pile rollers are best when used with rough, textured or exterior surfaces.

Always remember to brush or rinse your roller sleeve and allow to dry naturally before first use to remove any residual fibres so that they don't come off in your paint.

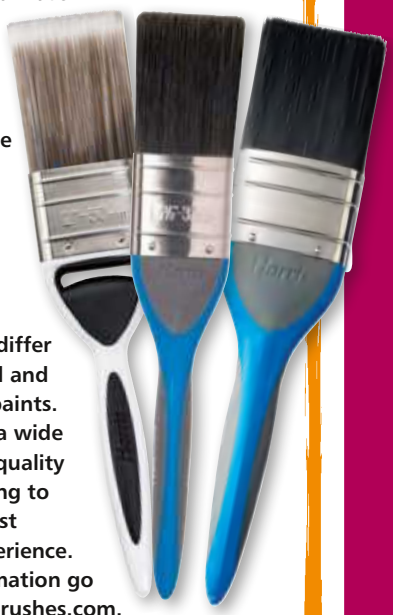
Order of business

Start with the ceiling, as it is the messiest and most awkward surface to work on – paint is likely to spray onto the walls. Then move on to painting wall edges around light switches, skirting boards, and corners by using a one and a half or two inch brush. This is called cutting in.

Paint an undercoat on any wood surface such as doors and window frames. Then paint the walls but remember to finish one wall at a time to avoid paint drying out and leaving uneven tide marks. Once your walls are complete, go back to add a full coat of paint to any woodwork.

Aftercare

If you look after brushes properly, you will find that they can last a lifetime. At the end of your project, wipe as much excess paint as possible onto paper towels, and then check the manufacturers' guidelines for cleaning your tools, as it will differ for water-based and solvent-based paints.



Harris offers a wide range of great quality products, helping to give you the best decorating experience. For more information go to www.harrisbrushes.com.

Q I'm worried that I might have a mouse in my kitchen – how do I know for sure and what can I do?
Lynne H, by email

A *David Cross, head of technical training at, Rentokil Pest Control, has this advice...*

Mice are a common problem in kitchens, attracted by the abundance of food, warmth and shelter on offer. Mice are also under constant threat from predators and so will only feel safe if they have somewhere to hide. By knowing the signs to look out for and taking practical preventative steps, you can greatly reduce your chances of playing host to these unwanted visitors.

Given the choice, mice will go for carbohydrate and sugar-rich foods that deliver the most energy but they will eat almost anything. As this is the case, storing food appropriately is the first step in keeping them at bay. Food should be stored in sealed containers to prevent mice gaining access and to minimise any smells that may attract them. In addition, all food waste should be double bagged and placed in bins with lids.

Preventing mice from accessing your property is also very important. Ensure that there are no gaps at the bases of external doors and that there are no holes around pipework entering the building.

If you think you might have mice, look for the following signs:

1. Smell and sound: Mice produce a musty smell and are often very noisy. You're likely to hear scrabbling sounds when they're present.
2. Droppings: Mouse droppings are typically 3mm - 7mm long and spindle shaped.
3. Smears: You may notice grease from mice brushing up against your walls, kitchen counters and cupboards.
4. Damage: Perhaps one of the first signs of mouse activity will be the presence of damaged food and food packaging in cupboards and larders.

If you have a problem with mice it is important to catch it early so you can consult a professional pest controller and deal with the infestation before the population size grows.

Image iStock

ASK THE EXPERTS

If you have a DIY or maintenance question, write to Ask the Experts, Your Home, Hubert Burda Media UK, The Tower, Phoenix Square, Colchester, Essex CO4 9HU or email **asktheexperts@yhmag.co.uk**

Feature Lisa Hibberd

Your December checklist

Discover seasonal tasks for your home and garden

IF YOU DO ONE THING THIS MONTH...

With Christmas just around the corner, your diary, and your house, are about to get very full. Make room for guests, party outfits, festive food and presents with our tips for a pre-Christmas clear out

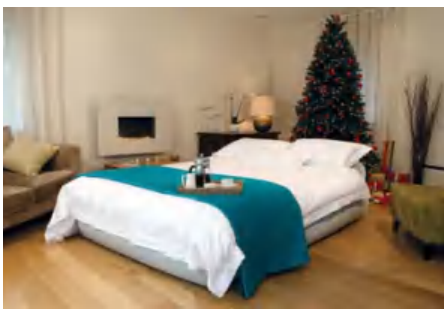
● Make some space in your wardrobe and the kids' toy box by donating anything you've outgrown to charity. Sign up to Oxfam's Tag Your Bag campaign and you'll get a little something back in the form of Nectar points too. Upon signing up you'll automatically get 100 Nectar points, then once you've received your tags in the post, take your tagged bags to your nearest Oxfam store and you'll get two Nectar points per £1 when your items are sold. The Argos Toy Exchange will be running again this year too, so take any old toys to your local Argos or Barnado's store before 20th November for the charity to sell and in return you'll get a £5 Argos voucher to use when you spend £35 on toys.

● A good cook never blames their tools but make sure you throw out any cooking utensils and pans that are beyond repair. There's nothing worse than your Christmas dinner being ruined by bits of burnt-on food and reorganising your cupboards will make the whole day much less stressful. While you're in the kitchen, try to use up any food in the freezer to make room for all your frozen party nibbles. You could even host a freezer dinner party for a purse-friendly get together with friends and a chance to get rid of more food that's been taking up valuable space.

● Have a re-jig of your living areas to make room for guests so that you're not living on top of each other. If you want to get rid of any larger pieces of furniture, you can sell them on sites such as eBay and Gumtree and specify that the items are for collection only to save you the hassle of arranging delivery. Furniture that you want to keep but won't need to use can be stored in the garage or a room where you won't be entertaining guests, to free up some extra space for chairs or blow up beds.

Essential buy for December

If you've got guests staying over the festive period, upgrade them from the sofa to a blow-up bed that's as good as the real thing. The AeroBed can be fully inflated in just three minutes and the full-height design means it's easy to get in and out of for older guests. The bed's patented Whoosh™ valve also means that it deflates in seconds, so you can quickly and easily store it away in the handy carry bag during the day.



Comfort Classic raised double airbed, £139.99, Aerobed

A neat idea

If you're going to be travelling by train to visit family or just to do a bit of shopping, make sure you get a Two Together railcard. You'll get a third off the price of your ticket for Anytime, Off-peak and Advance travel when two named adults travel together, all for only £30 for a year. Plus, the card will even entitle you to discounts on theatre tickets, holidays and Virgin Experience Days. Visit www.twotogether-railcard.co.uk to get yours.

Feature Laura McLeish Image Dunelm

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Reader homes

Find great ideas for your home with four fabulous houses to inspire you

80 Sara and Robert transformed their Victorian terrace

Show off your hard work in *Your Home*

Have you just finished decorating your home? If so we'd love to see your photos and, who knows, your home may be featured in a future issue. Please send photos to Laura Higgins, Your Home, Hubert Burda Media UK, The Tower, Phoenix Square, Colchester, CO4 9HU

74 Debbie and Richard restored a collection of period cottages

92 Karen and Reuben blended their styles perfectly

88 Sarah and Adrian gave their 50s cottage a family makeover

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Richard made the units using reclaimed wood and ironmongery. The dining table was given by a neighbour who was moving house, so Debbie stripped the wax off it and painted the legs, adding chairs bought from various antique shops. The original ceiling beams are so delicate that Richard built a new floor with a cavity in the bedroom above to prevent them getting damaged

I love living in our corner of Eden

Debbie and Richard Greaves have created their own version of paradise in a period cottage nestled in the Cumbrian hills

Good idea!

The stone flags were taken from one of the outbuildings and relaid in the kitchen.

Many years ago there would have been cattle in Debbie and Richard's living room, their breath and body heat warming the kitchen scullery next door. Now the cattle are long gone and there is a modern log fire to heat the entire house. The stone flagged kitchen has an Aga instead of a cast-iron range and there are reclaimed floorboards where there used to be straw. But Debbie and Richard were keen to preserve the original fabric, character and charm of the shepherd's cottage, which is one of four farm buildings they have renovated and converted at A Corner of Eden in the stunning Eden Valley since they moved here 10 years ago. 'When we bought the farmhouse it came with a group of dilapidated barns and outbuildings which we have turned into holiday accommodation,' says Debbie. 'We moved from one property to another as we renovated. The cottage was created from part of the Georgian farmhouse and an adjoining medieval long house.'

The enterprising couple have done most of the work themselves. Richard – with the help of his father and Debbie's Uncle Alan – has tackled everything from the building work to furniture making, ▷

The stone lintel over the Aga is original. Richard made the latch doors from reclaimed wood and Debbie found the dresser on eBay for £165. The wire shelf – perfect for storing teapots – cost £40 from Edmondson's in Kendal

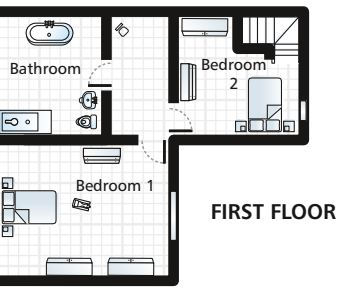
COME ON IN...

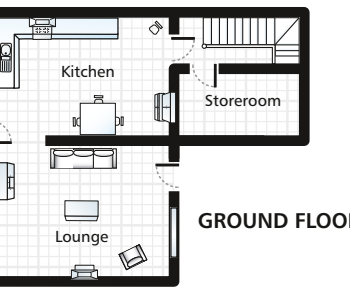
THE HOME:
A Grade II listed, two-bedroom cottage near Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria. It was created from a 16th-century long house and part of a Georgian farmhouse which was built adjoining the medieval structure.

WHO LIVES HERE?
Debbie Greaves, who runs A Corner of Eden self-catering properties, from their home (www.acornerofeden.co.uk), and her husband, Richard Greaves, Head of European Offices for a global management training company. They have lived here since 2013.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE ROOM?
'The living room is really cosy, especially at Christmas time. We love sitting warm and dry by the fire when the wind and snow is swirling around outside.'

WHAT WAS YOUR BEST BARGAIN?
'The sofa, which we acquired years ago for next to nothing because it was damaged stock. It's still as comfortable as the day we got it – and we still haven't been able to find any damage!'





For stockists see page 121

Feature Heather Dixon **Photos** Katie Lee

After years of buying fresh Christmas trees Debbie and Richard invested £190 in a realistic faux tree from Hayes Garden World, to save money long-term. A Vision 500 log-burner, which cost around £1,400 from Clearview Stoves, heats the entire cottage. The sofa and armchair, which they have had for years, were both damaged stock from a shop in Manchester. The trunk, which serves as storage and a coffee table, cost around £50 from GB Antiques and the floor lamp was made by Richard. He also made the picture frame on the wall from salvaged bits of wood and hung it with hearts on a string

A friend made the rustic coat pegs which hang just inside the front door. The dresser was an eBay find and cost £165

The living room used to be a cattle shed. The cows would put their heads through an opening – now the doorway into the kitchen – and their breath would warm the adjacent room where people lived. The reclaimed wooden floor was laid by Richard. Debbie used Danish oil to give the sideboard, given by her mum, a new lease of life. 'I remember it from when I was a child,' says Debbie

Good idea!
Debbie uses fresh foliage from the garden to decorate throughout the house at Christmas.

'Living here gives us a real sense of connection to the land and the seasons.'

◁ while Debbie has focused on the interior design and sourcing materials. 'We never sit still,' says Debbie. 'We both work full-time as well as doing the renovations, but we love the whole process. We are both passionate about reusing things, never wasting anything. Richard has two sheds full of bits and pieces of wood, old furniture and metal that he's brought home and stored in the sheds until he finds a use for them.'

In the cottage, for example, there are floorboards reclaimed from one of the barns; shelves, window ledges, beds, beams and chopping boards made from a diseased oak tree which was felled and cut into planks; rails made from branches and lamp bases made from old newel posts.

'My dad always kept things in case they came in useful and I have always liked making things from wood and metal,' says Richard. 'I still have the first thing I ever made – a wooden spatula – which we use to this day. I never tire of taking something fragile and turning it into something useful and strong. There are so many things I still want to make.'

While Richard is creating furniture, Debbie gets creative in her own way – baking all their bread, making jams, chutneys and flavoured gin from home grown fruits and vegetables and, particularly at Christmas, baking cakes, scones and Christmas pudding, as well as the 'full works' traditional Christmas dinner.

'I have an eye for detail so I am constantly upgrading and improving the home,' says Debbie. 'At Christmas I decorate the cottage with greenery from our garden. We like everything to be natural and rustic so we go on long walks and collect twigs, foliage, ivy, berries and pine cones – anything we can turn into decorations for the home. We never come back from a walk empty-handed.'

When Debbie and Richard renovated the cottage they installed new plumbing and electrics, laid new floors using reclaimed wood and stone, replastered to create round-edged, rustic corners, added old oak beams in the ceilings and then ▷

Debbie bought the bedside cabinets for £120 for the pair from Annie's Attic in Kendal and the drawers and lamps online

Although the cottage is small, Debbie and Richard have created a spacious landing and maximised the headroom by leaving the roof space open to the beams. The door was made by Richard. Debbie bought the chair for £95 from eBay

decorated throughout. The cottage has evolved with a mix of Richard's handmade furniture, pieces handed down through their families and new fittings which give the property balance and a modern touch.

Richard has a passion for Middle Eastern rugs which also find their way into the home. 'Debbie prefers modern rugs but I have quite a large collection of Middle Eastern rugs which I've bought on my travels through work,' says Richard. 'Fortunately and they do fit well with the overall style of the cottage.'

Although Debbie and Richard are on the go 24/7, and constantly repairing, updating and maintaining their properties, they agree that they are in it for the long-term. 'The business is part of our lifestyle so everything blends together,' says Debbie. 'Living here gives us a real sense of connection to the land and the seasons. We spend a lot of time outdoors so we are acutely aware of the farming cycles, changes to the weather and the impact that has on the landscape. In the depths of winter we might be cut off by snow, but we stock up on provisions and enjoy the solitude and landscapes that winter brings. Most of all we have loved Christmas here because we can just light the fire, close the door and enjoy time to ourselves in our own small corner of Eden.' YH

The bath was one of their biggest outlays at £1,300 from the Cast Iron Bath Company. Debbie bought the mirror, which cost £220, from Laura Ashley and propped it above the bath to bounce light around the room. The walls are painted in Pecan matt emulsion from Habitat

Good idea!

The bed is another of Richard's creations, made from oak planks and reclaimed timber.

'We both love anything with history and character.'

Debbie and Richard bought the bed years ago but have given it a new lease of life with a headboard made from foam and MDF covered with Abraham Moon tweed and a pair of antlers. The bedside cabinets came from an antique shop and Richard made the lamp bases from newel posts

5 IDEAS TO STEAL

FLORAL DISPLAY

Create a feature with a striking wallpaper set behind your bed.

Botanic charcoal/gold wallpaper by Kelly Hoppen, £20 per roll, Graham & Brown

Donkey Ride claypaint, £35 per 2.5l, Earthborn

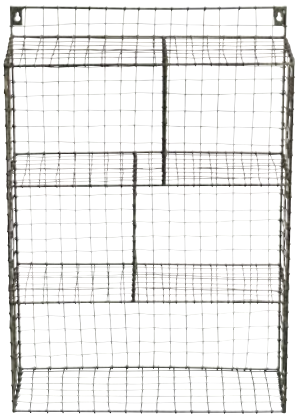
NICE AND NEUTRAL

Use a subtle neutral on the walls, adding colour with furniture and accessories.

RUSTIC TOUCHES

Debbie has used old trunks and baskets as storage throughout her home.

Locker Room shelf, £69.95, Nkuku



TRADITIONAL TARTAN

Use tartans, checks and plaids to add colour to upholstery.

Cairngorm in Cardinal from Highlands collection, £24.99 per m, Prestigious Textiles

SHOW SOME HEART

Add light to a dark spot with a string of pretty lights.

Wicker heart string lights, £7, Wilko

This house needed a lot of work, but we jumped at the chance

Sara and Robert Scott transformed a dated period house in Edinburgh to create a vibrant and modern family home

Good idea!

Consider using a single accent colour for your Christmas decorations and wrapping to create a unified look.

Sara and Robert Scott had been looking for a house in Edinburgh's Trinity area for some time before spotting this property for sale back in 2007. 'It was difficult to find a house of this size at our budget,' says Sara, so even though this house needed work, the couple jumped at the chance.

'It was a doer-upper,' Sara says. 'The house needed to have everything done. There was no central heating, and no kitchen when we moved in so we lived on microwaved food and barbecues for

The high ceiling means that Sara can choose a large scale tree that works with the drama of the space. Sara loves decorating for Christmas. As she says, 'I collect decorations every year.'

The living room feels warm and cosy all year round thanks to the red palette. 'We liked the colour of these sofas from Ikea and the covers can be removed and washed so they have survived many a spillage,' says Sara. The curtain fabric came from Remnant Kings and the curtains throughout were made by Robert's sister Lynn, who has the soft furnishings business Harbour Interiors. The pale grey wall colour is a trade colour supplied by the decorator; White Mist from Dulux is similar

the first six months.' The interior was very dated with its layers of wallpaper and old carpets, while the bathroom had five different types of tiling, none of which matched.

However, this house presented a great opportunity for Sara and Robert to create a family home, and eight years on, as the couple prepare to celebrate their first Christmas with their baby daughter Rosie, all the time and effort they poured into transforming this interior has clearly been worth it. The couple tackled the bulk of the refurbishment over their first six months here, and lived in the house through the work. 'That was a big challenge, and we were just about to get married at the time as well so there was a lot going on,' Sara recalls. Robert project managed the various trades involved, and the couple worked with tradesmen who were recommended through a friend. 'We wanted to restore the house as things had been removed over the years,' Sara says.

Splashes of red such as this striking bird add to the festive feel

Although the ornate plaster ceiling detailing in the living room was still intact, the original fireplace had long gone, so the couple sourced a new surround that suited the age of the house from a local architectural salvage yard. Likewise, they reinstated period ironmongery for the doors and windows. ▷

COME ON IN...

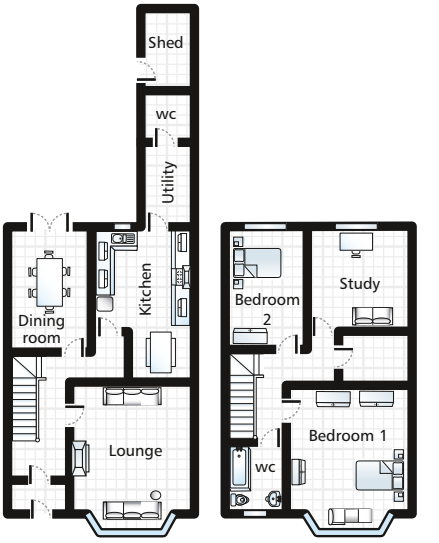
THE HOME:
A terraced Victorian house in Edinburgh's Trinity area, with three bedrooms, built circa 1900.

WHO LIVES HERE?
Sara and Robert Scott, who are both lawyers, with their six month-old daughter Rosie, and cat Capi.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?
'The living room, as we haven't really changed anything since we first did it – it must have worked out well first time as I usually like changing things.'

ANY DIY DISASTERS?
'When the fireplace was installed in the living room it was just slightly wrong, so we had to say to the tradesmen, 'You need to do that again'.'

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT LIVING HERE?
'It's a wonderful area to live in. Since being on maternity leave I've realised how much is within walking distance.'



GROUND FLOOR FIRST FLOOR

For stockists see page 121

Feature Fiona Reid **Photos** Susan Burnell

The couple chose a timeless and contemporary kitchen design with black granite worktops from the now closed MFI. The stone floor tiles from Topps Tiles echo the look of traditional flagstones. The stainless range cooker and extractor are by Smeg. The wall colour is Yellow Ground by Farrow & Ball

By restricting the materials to stone and timber the couple have created a dining-kitchen with timeless appeal. The floor tiles are from Topps Tiles with a dining table and bench seating from Omni Furnishing

'I collect new decorations every year so that we have our old favourites and then add in some new ones.'

◁ Although it was hard living here through the work, there were good days, like coming home to find that the fireplace had been fitted in the living room,' Sara says, and another such moment was when the new kitchen was in place. The couple wanted a traditional yet contemporary design that wouldn't date, and chose a timber kitchen from MFI with granite worktops, and with large stone tiles that recall the look of traditional flagstones. The same cabinets and tiling flow into the adjoining utility room, which sits in an existing outshot at the rear of the house. 'We knew the style we wanted here but we needed help with the design and making the space work for us,' Sara says. Although there's a dining room alongside

French doors lead from the dining room into the garden. The couple chose a classic timber dining table and leather upholstered chairs from Omni Furnishing. The wall colour is a trade paint; Frosted Dawn from Dulux is similar. The black ceiling light from B&Q adds a touch of drama

Good idea!

Add natural textures to your Christmas table with fresh cut flowers or leaves, as Sara did here using eucalyptus branches.

the kitchen – which comes into its own when entertaining for Christmas – it was important that the kitchen also contained an informal seating area which the couple use every day. 'Some people on this street have knocked through between the dining room and kitchen to create a really big space, but I like having the two separate rooms,' Sara says.

Sara acknowledges that it helped to bring in professionals for jobs that the couple might have been tempted to tackle themselves. 'We had a really good decorator who was very good at advising us on colours,' she says. 'There were a few times when he would say, 'Really, that colour?'.' Sara also took guidance from the natural light when choosing the palette, opting ▷

Sara designed the bathroom to feel timeless and tactile. 'We started this room with the fittings as I knew I wanted quite a square basin and taps, with lovely stone tiling,' says Sara. The fittings came from Victor Paris with tiling from The Original Tile Company. The timber stool is from French Connection

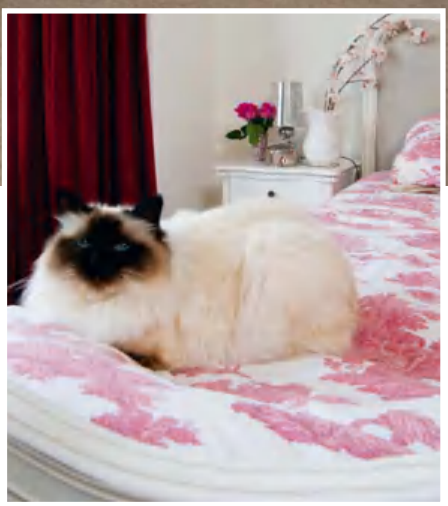
For the master bedroom, Sara sourced the furniture online; the Delphine bed from The French Bedroom Company is a similar design. The velvet curtains were made by Harbour Interiors. The French toile-style bed linen came from Laura Ashley, as did the chandelier. The decorator used a trade colour here; Wimborne White by Farrow & Ball is similar. The Provencal white bedside tables are from The French Bedroom Company

Good idea!

Sara has used red as a dramatic accent in this room, as she has in the living room, adding impact to the softer pinks.

The Canterbury Bed from Feather & Black is similar to this bed in the guest bedroom. Sara added pattern with the pillowcases and cushion from Joules, and with a faux fur throw from Next Home. The oversized candle is from Jeffreys Interiors. The silk curtains were made by Harbour Interiors. The pale pink wall colour creates a warm glow that guests always like; this colour is trade, but Jasmine Shimmer from Dulux is a similar shade

‘I thought about adding wallpaper to our bedroom, but this is such a bright room, and it’s nice to wake up with lots of light.’



◁ for pale hues that would enhance the light and then adding in pops of colour with the accessories.

The last part of the house to be transformed was the bathroom. ‘It looked awful but it functioned as it was, so we lived with it for a while, and then we went on holiday when the work was being done here,’ Sara says. Again, the couple chose natural stone finishes and contemporary fittings for a timeless and elegant look.

‘It helped living here through the project as it meant we could work with people, but there were downsides,’ Sara says, recalling the day the couple went to a wedding and had to shower in the hotel between the wedding and reception as they had no water at home.

There were exciting parts too, as the couple moved here from a modern flat and were furnishing this house more or less from scratch. Sara takes inspiration from vintage design, including classic French and Italian styling, and is also inspired by beautiful colours and nature. Sometimes Sara started with a theme, as in the master bedroom where she chose French-styled furniture, and sometimes with a colour, as in the living room which she designed around her favourite colour red.

And, of course, red is a perfect colour when styling your home for Christmas. ‘I think Christmas is my favourite time of year,’ Sara says. ‘I love getting together and celebrating with family, and I can be a little over the top when it comes to decorations. I have my favourites that I’ve collected over time and then add something new every year – with lots of fairy lights!’ And, this year, with lots of presents under the tree for Rosie’s first Christmas. YH

5 IDEAS TO STEAL

WILD SIDE
Bring a love of nature and wildlife into your home.

Stag head cushion, £20, John Lewis

ALTERNATIVE USES
Swap a side table for a leather pouffe.

Moroccan leather pouffe in chestnut, £95, Bohemia

BIRD SONG
Add a romantic touch to your bedroom style.

Jigsaw Romantic Bird bedding, from £20 for a pillowcase, John Lewis

LIGHT SHOW
Add drama with an elegant chandelier.

Shamley 12-light chandelier in white or gold, £367.50, Laura Ashley

ON REFLECTION
An over-mantle mirror will bounce light around the room.

Ivory over-mantle mirror by Decorative Mirrors Online, £276, Notonthehighstreet

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We've created a cosy family home

Sarah and Adrian Cavenagh's open-plan layout in their small cottage is perfect for their family lifestyle

Good idea!

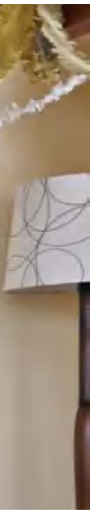
Try introducing some key furniture pieces in a bold contrasting colour to liven up neutral room schemes, as Sarah and Adrian have done with their red sofa and coffee table.

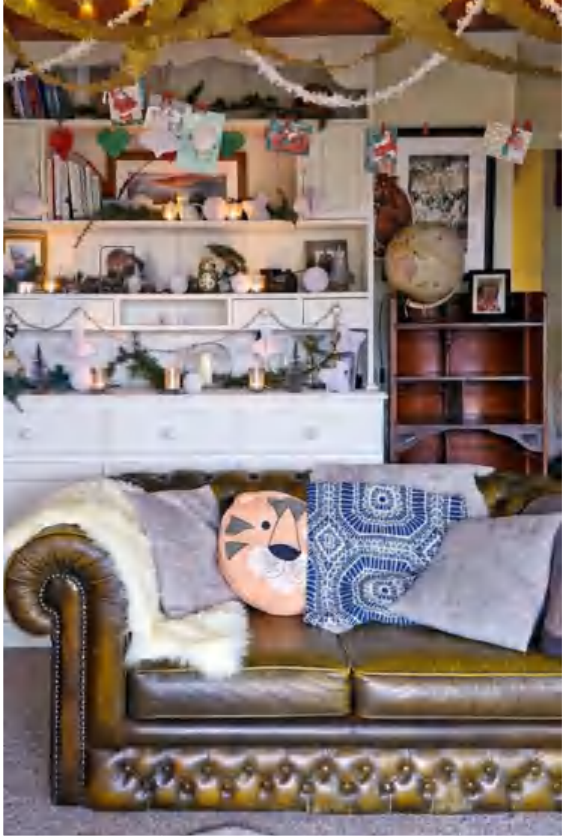
The living space is one of Sarah's favourite rooms. The roomy red leather and Chesterfield sofas, laden with sheepskins from Ikea give it a warm, cosy feel, especially in winter, and the white and silver rustic decorations from Pipii set the mood for Christmas

There's a lovely feeling of being at one with nature as you look out onto the stunning mountain view from the windows of Sarah and Adrian's little cottage, especially when it's on a cold winter afternoon on the run up to Christmas. Sarah and her two children, Evie and Elizabeth, busily decorate their little cottage with paper chains, soft twinkly fairy lights and silver decorations.

Situated on the outskirts of the town of Brecon the cottage sits at the foot of a small winding driveway. 'We are a bit off the beaten track here but can easily nip into town to shop for food supplies as well as see friends,' says Sarah. 'And there's also a lovely local school in the next village that the girls now go to.'

The cottage was built in the 1950s on the site of an old milking shed and had always been a property that had been attached to Adrian's neighbouring family home. When Adrian's father's housekeeper moved out, having lived in the cottage for 20 years, he offered them the chance to live there. 'We'd moved around quite a bit over the past few years so it was lovely to have been offered the house as Evie and Elizabeth were growing up and we felt ready to settle in a permanent home,' says Sarah.





'The dresser, bought from a good friend Martha who owns Morgans Antique Shop in the nearby town of Brecon, is one of our best purchases as it stores away so much of our clutter,' says Sarah. Combined with the wooden shelves made from an old rowing boat, once Adrian's father's, and a beautifully aged Chesterfield, inherited from Sarah's family, the overall look has lovely textures and charm

The couple moved in April 2013 and spent the month before preparing it to move in. 'It was a bit of a whirlwind start to the year as we got married in February 2013, had our wedding party on the weekend at end of March 2013 and Adrian was in the cottage the following Monday preparing it to move in.

Sarah loved the cottage and its location as soon as she set eyes on it. The only thing it needed was some modernisation, lightening up and a few small adjustments to the kitchen so it was family-friendly. Adrian set to work organising some specialists to come and install a new central heating system and replaster of some of the walls in the living space.

The biggest changes were installing a new kitchen and replacing the fireplace with a new wood-burner. The kitchen had originally been a very small galley kitchen with just enough room for a cooker and sink. 'To maximise the kitchen space Adrian had to block off the back door leading out to the cloak room on the side of the house and remove the old airing cupboard and water tank,' recalls Sarah. The butler sink and kitchen units were salvaged from a friend's garage just before she started breaking it down for firewood. It just about fitted into the space they had and Adrian bought some offcuts of wood and made them into worktops.

Then the stone-clad fire surround and fireplace was ▷

The cream kitchen units and warm solid wood worktops are given a splash of colour with the accessories. Pale green and blue pots and pans fill the shelves and rustic ceramics, all from Denby, add a mellow tone and little flashes of red and floral patterned tea towels give the kitchen a little contrasting colour and pattern to the scheme

COME ON IN...

WHO LIVES HERE?

Sarah Cavenagh, a community nurse and her husband Adrian, a professional rally co-driver and specialist builder and joiner. They live here with their two children Evie, five, and Elizabeth, two and a half.

THE HOUSE

A 1950s two-bedroom cottage in the county of Powys, South Wales, which they moved into in April 2013.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT LIVING HERE?

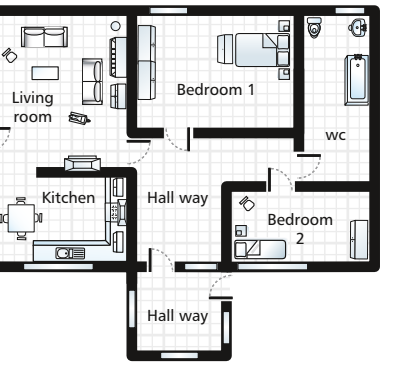
'The best thing is the location as we feel we have the best of both worlds. We are away from it all in some respects but are close enough to the nearby town of Brecon. There is an incredible view to look out to every day.'

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

'The kitchen as it was done on an incredibly small budget. It was originally a friend's kitchen that had been left for scrap in her garage. We jumped at the chance to have it and Adrian cleverly tailored it to fit into our kitchen space.'

WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCE?

'That things don't always go to plan. We had a month to prepare the house and move in and we were steaming ahead with installing the central heating and plaster work but were let down quite badly with the floor installation which delayed us for a couple of weeks. It was a matter of keeping calm and going with it.'



GROUND FLOOR

For stockists see page 121

Feature Sian Williams **Photos** Bridget Peirson

Good idea!

'The living space works really well as we can all be in the same room doing completely different things and still be able to communicate with one another.'

The dining room chairs and table were bought for next-to-nothing at an auction in Brecon. The folksy look of the chairs blend really well with all the other elements of the room because Sarah has added flashes of red in the seat pads and blind from Homebase

ripped out and the wall were plastered and skimmed. A more practical wood-burner took its place which gives an extra boost of heat throughout the whole living space in winter.

The bathroom layout has been kept the same with the original 1950s bathroom suite as it was in good condition. 'We just tiled the basin splashback and the wall where the bath was and added a new bath panel and shower screen.'

'Our budget was small but we saved a lot of money simply because of Adrian being in the building trade so he could do much of the work himself,' says Sarah. Sandy, Adrian's father kindly helped them out with the cost of the heating and flooring.

Everything was running smoothly until it came to the installation of the flooring. The flooring company kept on changing the fitting date and eventually it got to a point where they were so close to the moving in date it was done really last-minute. 'The final straw was when they installed the wrong lino in the bathroom,' says Sarah. 'But at that point we were under pressure to move in so we had to go with it and it blended in reasonably well in the end.'

With the big jobs done and the family now moved in and settled, thoughts turned to decorating and personalising their home. Sarah loves a mix of eras, anything from vintage and modern country looks to retro, one of her favourites. 'Most of the house is painted in a pale cream backdrop to make it easier to accommodate our eclectic tastes and keep the rooms light and up-beat,' she says.

The couple bought very little furniture, most of it was either inherited from family or given to them by friends. 'I'm very much for making do with what we've got,' says Sarah. 'We bought just a few pieces that we needed, one being the cherry red sofa bed from DFS which is essential when my parents or friends come to stay, and a white distressed dresser bought at Morgans antique shop in Brecon, to store away children's toys, CDs and tableware.'

'The paper chains in Evie's room bring back memories of the decorations we had when I was growing up as a child.'

Splurges of colour and pattern were added mainly in accessories and just the coffee table and sofa bed in the living area. 'I love textiles and have made quite a few cushions and throws from retro-inspired fabrics to blend in with our eclectic room schemes,' she says. The cushions in their bedroom and on their lovely beaten-up Chesterfield sofa were made from Macrame fabric from Harlequin in Indigo and Ivory colourways, and the bed spread and pillows in Evie's bedroom were made from Dogs in Clogs in Red and Rainbow Brights from Sanderson.

With the majority of work done the Cavenagh's feel very happy with what

Evie's favourite decorations are displayed on the windowsill, along with a jug of spruce foliage, in colours to match her room scheme

The original Victorian wrought iron bed in Sarah's bedroom was bought on eBay for £150. The bed is layered up with crochet patterned bedspreads and cushions made from Macrame fabric from Harlequin, in Indigo and Ivory, and a vintage tapestry quilt gives the bed a classic Welsh feel which works beautifully with the softer navy and cream colours and the grey fur throw from Cox & Cox. White paper chains, honeycomb decorations from Pipii and delicate fairy lights are strung across the beam, giving the room a cosy, festive touch

Good idea!

Cosy up a bedroom for winter as Sarah has done in their bedroom by adding layers of fur, retro Welsh throws and embroidered bed spreads and cushions for a warm, folksy look.

they've done. 'Our favourite room is the open-plan living space as we can all be in the same room in different areas and still be able to talk with one another whatever we are doing,' says Sarah. As well as this the expanse of windows means Sarah and Adrian can keep an eye on the girls while they play in the garden.

'I think if we'd had the budget to do it again we'd have spent a bit more money on better quality flooring, but apart from that we a really happy with everything and feel very settled here,' says Sarah. There are certainly no plans to move at the moment and both talk about looking to extend the cottage if they stay long-term so the girls can have their own rooms. But for now the family can get into the festive spirit and enjoy their cosy home and wonderful view of snow clouds rolling off the mountains. YH

'With the bathroom we kept the original 1950s bathroom suite as it was in good condition but worked around it tiling a splashback for both the basin and bath from Homebase, and a utilitarian-style plywood bath panel, wood and varnish sourced from Wickes, and glass shower panel from Homebase

5 IDEAS TO STEAL

STATEMENT STYLE

Add a blast of colour with a sofa in an eye-catching colour.

Blaze leather statement sofa in Enzo Red, £778, DFS

TRADITIONAL ELEMENTS

Make a scheme homely with a selection of throws.

Red and white tapestry blanket, £250, Blodwen

KITSCH CHRISTMAS

Decorate with brightly coloured decorations to bring back childhood memories.

Tissue paper honeycomb garland, £6.50, Pipii

ON DISPLAY

Show-off collections of china or glassware on a large dresser.

Marseille distressed white painted dresser, £775, The Cotswold Company

SNUG AND COSY

Stay warm throughout winter with a snuggly sheepskin.

Ludde sheepskins in grey and white, £30 each, Ikea

Good idea!

A recycled sideboard from Barker & Stonehouse provides an alternative focal point, since there is no fireplace in the room.

Our home is full of collections

Karen and Reuben Kench have successfully blended both of their styles to create a relaxed family home that comes into its own at Christmas

Karen favours muted traditional colours at Christmas with lots of layers and texture. The yellow Skye check throw and cushions are from Barker & Stonehouse while the purple and white cushions are from John Lewis. 'I love how the sideboard pulls together all the different woods in the room,' Karen says

Reuben's old plan chest for his photography was in two pieces so they added castors to one half and made it into a table, which sits on a rug from John Lewis. 'I like the combination of both of our things,' says Karen. 'There are artworks we both had from before we got married and new ones that we've bought together.'

Christmas is Karen Kench's favourite time of the year and offers a great excuse to bring out all her favourite vintage glassware, special cutlery and traditional decorations. 'I love returning home at Christmas as the house looks so warm and welcoming,' says Karen, who lives there with husband Reuben and stepchildren Imogen and Sol. 'We have fairy lights up all year round but always add more at Christmas, and I like to make the house feel cosy with lots of extra blankets and candles around.'

Although Reuben has lived in their 1960s house in Yarm for seven years, Karen moved in four years ago after selling her small two-bedroom Victorian house in Sheffield. The couple first met at Karen's mum's wedding 25 years ago, but they didn't get together until many years later. 'My stepdad was one of the lecturers when Reuben did his photography degree and they kept in touch,' she explains.

Like many couples moving in together in their forties, their home has evolved to accommodate their differing styles and accumulated possessions. 'Reuben has more modern tastes while I'm more into vintage, but we both like collecting so we have some common ground there,' says ▷

The cocktail cabinet was discovered by Karen's mum in a Hastings junk shop and is a treasured piece. It's a great spot for Karen's cow lampshade, which costs £47 through her Etsy shop Kettle of Fish Designs and the deer candle holders that she sells on her stall at Christmas

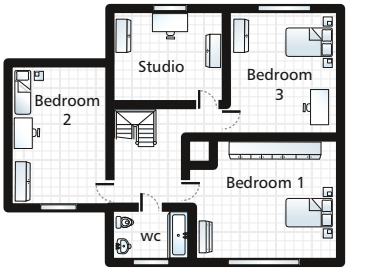
COME ON IN...

THE HOME:
A four-bedroom 1960s link-detached house in Yarm, Stockton-on-Tees.

WHO LIVES HERE?
Karen and Reuben Kench, both 49, Reuben's children Imogen, 17, and Solomon, 13, plus their lurcher Murphy. Karen runs Etsy homeware shop Kettle of Fish Designs, while Reuben is Head of Culture & Leisure at Stockton Council.

WHERE DO YOU SHOP?
'There are lots of artists and designers on Etsy and Folksy making really beautiful things and they are my first port of call when looking for gifts. I love shops like RE in Corbridge and Hendy's Homestore in Hastings. Both have a really distinctive feel and are full of hidden treasures.'

DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE?
'It's definitely eclectic and relaxed with aspects of retro and modern vintage. I love muted shades and natural materials like glass, wood, cotton, linen and tarnished metals.'



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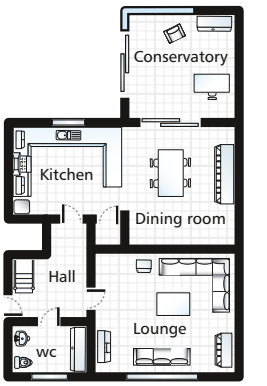


GROUND FLOOR

For stockists see page 121

Feature Karen Wilson **Photos** Katie Lee

Reuben inherited the Italian 1950s oak modular unit, which is complemented by a mid-century style pendant from B&Q, and is the perfect place to display Karen's collection of glassware including cake stands, domes and vases. 'When the fairy lights are on, they really make all the glassware sparkle so we keep them up all year round,' says Karen. Decorations inspired by nature dress this room including pine cones, winter foliage and a Bloomingville Christmas tree lantern from Out There Interiors

◁ Karen. 'There's definitely a lot more stuff in the house now, but everyone agrees it feels cosier and more homely.'

They've also adapted pieces that didn't work before, such as Reuben's old photography plan chest which they put on castors and turned into a coffee table, covering the damaged edges with old wooden rulers.

In the past Karen always used to be drawn to period properties, but now she says the mid-century property has definitely grown on her. 'There's so much more space and light with huge wall-to-wall windows,' she explains.

Although Reuben had already opened up the dining room to the kitchen and re-instated a wall between the lounge and dining room, after Karen moved in they decided to add a conservatory. 'Before there was a flat roof extension, which made the dining room feel very dark and dingy but now we spend the majority of our time in the kitchen/diner as it's so much lighter and feels like part of the garden,' says Karen. 'It gives us an extra room so the children can have their own space too.'

The wooden cake stand gets used all year round but is a favourite at Christmas, along with the pretty square plates that were a present from Karen's mother-in-law

'I don't like waste so we'll always try and adapt, recycle and re-use pieces in new ways.'

The couple used local firm Almark Ltd to take down the existing room, dig the foundations and build a new bespoke conservatory which is part powder-coated metal and part uPVC – all for £19,000. 'We wanted the frames in black rather than the standard white as it looks more architectural,' says Karen. 'And although the company had never done one like that before, they agreed that it turned out really well. There was no fuss, mess or bother and they also re-laid the patio afterwards.'

At the same time they turned the garage into a workshop, where Karen likes to indulge in a spot of wood-working, and made their bedroom slightly bigger to accommodate both sets of clothes. 'We ripped out the dated built-in wardrobes in the master bedroom and stole some extra space by reversing a walk-in cupboard from Imogen's room next door,' she explains.

Since moving to Yarm, Karen has also been able to devote more time to her business, Kettle of Fish Designs, ▷

Karen has painted the conservatory walls the same shade of grey as the lounge. She loves sitting here working on her lampshades with a view of the garden. The wall light is from John Lewis

The wall hanging from Ikea gives the illusion of a Christmas tree in the conservatory while Karen's great-grandma's old nursing chair takes pride of place. 'It was always by the fire in my gran's kitchen and when I took the covers off I found a layer of faded vintage pink silk with her stitching,' she says. 'I could never part with it as it has such huge sentimental value.' The reproduction cabinet from Barker & Stonehouse is ideal for tableware and linens, as well as their nature and wildlife books so they can identify birds in the garden

Good idea!

Add colour to an otherwise white kitchen diner by painting the partition wall in a vibrant colour and carrying it into the kitchen.

Reuben wanted a splash of colour to liven up the simple white Ikea kitchen so they painted the dividing wall in 1981 Orange by Crown Originals. The Diamond trifle bowl and tumblers are from Next while the Linear Stem storage jars are by Orla Kiely and the tea towels are from designer Eloise Renouf

Annie Sloan Paris Grey chalk paint has been used to upcycle the Ikea bed and antique bedside cabinets, which tone in beautifully with the Woods wallpaper by Cole & Son. 'Although it looks like a mirrored headboard, it's just an old mirror propped behind,' says Karen, who's chosen linen bedding by H&M Home and a charcoal Newport throw from Barker & Stonehouse. The pigeon picture on the right from Etsy shop Tin Tabernacle, was an anniversary present for Reuben

With lots of light flooding onto the landing, this area offers plenty of scope to display the couple's favourite artwork and includes photographs by Reuben. The large red portraits were bought by Karen on an art college trip to Leningrad and Moscow in 1986

after leaving her job. A real kitchen table enterprise, she began by making jewellery and homewares for herself in 2009, and now has an Etsy shop selling bespoke lampshades, cushions and pictures inspired by her collection of books full of vintage illustrations. 'I couldn't find what I wanted in the shops so just started making things for myself,' explains Karen, who has a background in Fine Art. 'Then people started asking me where things were from and it grew from there. I would go to fairs with a little suitcase, which turned into a car full and now people recognise my distinctive designs.'

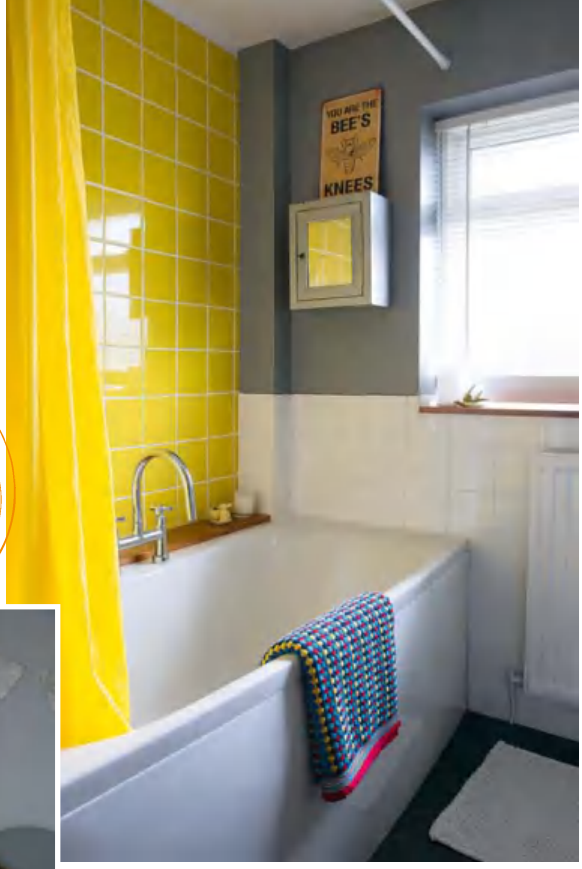
In December Karen loves taking her wares to the Christmas fairs, which always gets her in the festive spirit. 'The kids will put the tree up at the earliest possible opportunity with Christmas songs playing in the background,' she says. 'They have Christmas Day at their mum's every other year so sometimes we'll have our Christmas meal on Boxing Day or go for a walk and have a picnic in the snow. But it doesn't matter what day it is, as long as we're together.'

Karen's also settled into life in Yarm, and loves the area. 'I don't drive, so it's fantastic having a Post Office, hardware store and an amazing small department store within walking distance of home,' she says. 'There are a number of great independent restaurants and coffee shops along the high street and we can also head straight out along a beautiful stretch of river within a ten minute stroll.'

> 'I move things around the house a lot. It's surprising how you can put something in another room or next to something else and suddenly it sings.'

Having the kids' school within walking distance is another major plus. 'We'll certainly stay put until they've both moved out,' says Karen. 'I love this house but would ideally like a bigger garden, so that would be the major 'must have' for any future search.' YH

Having collected tin cabinets for many years, Karen mounted three in the bathroom for storage. 'I collected them in the early 90s when you could get them for £2 to £3 each,' she says. 'Every time I saw one, I would buy it.'



Good idea!

Revamp tired fitted bedroom furniture with local maps of the area, like Karen has done in Sol's bedroom, and add new colourful door knobs.

Imogen's bedroom reflects her passion for rowing. The Ikea bed features a 1930s bedspread from a junk shop in Sheffield and blue country floral embroidered cushion from Next. On the bedside table is one of Karen's small moth lampshades costing £39 from Kettle of Fish Designs

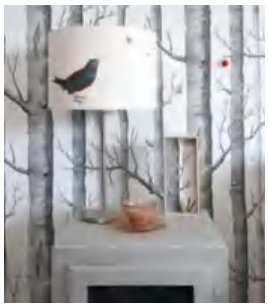
Good idea!

Karen used an epidiascope to project lettering onto the wall of Imogen's bedroom, giving her an outline to draw around freehand.

5 IDEAS TO STEAL

BIRDS AND BEES

Opt for prints inspired by nature featuring birds and bees.



Blackbird and bee 30cm drum hand printed lamp shade, £47, Kettle of Fish Designs

WORN MATERIALS

This solid pine sideboard has a beautiful worn vintage finish, and is a great base for creating displays like Karen's.

Fuz sideboard by Von Dutch Bone, £353, Design Botschaft

BECOME A COLLECTOR

Put glassware out on display, mixing new and vintage pieces.

Large cake dome, £37, Oliver Bonas

WALL DISPLAY

A deer head looks great all year round, but can be dressed up at Christmas.

White deer head, from £40, The French Bedroom Company

INDUSTRIAL TOUCHES

Wire storage units have a mid-century/industrial vibe and are perfect for displaying your favourite pieces.

Wire storage unit, £195, Vincent and Barn Ltd

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one they'll never forget.

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Christmas in store and online at **lakeland.co.uk**

LAKELAND
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Food & Drink

Turn the page for our top Christmas entertaining ideas…

3 ways with... Brussels sprouts

- To make sprout kebabs, in a roasting pan drizzle **300g trimmed Brussels sprouts** with **1 tbsp maple syrup**, **1 tsp olive oil**, and season. Roast for 15 minutes at 170°C/325°F/Gas Mark 3. Cool then wrap each sprout with **Parma ham** and push onto cocktail sticks. Dust with **plain flour** then dip into **1 whisked egg**, then roll in a mix of **100g grated Parmesan**, **200g panko bread crumbs** and **zest of 1 lemon**. Bake in the oven for 8-10 minutes at 190°C/375°F/Gas Mark 5. Serve with **crème fraîche** or **Greek yogurt**. Serves 6.
- For potato and Brussels sprouts crush, boil **650g quartered potatoes** for 8-10 minutes. Fry **6 finely diced bacon rashers** in oil until crisp, set aside. In the same pan fry **250g shredded sprouts** until tender. Crush the cooked potatoes, then add to the pan with everything else, season with black pepper and combine over a low heat. Serves 4.
- For a quick stir fry, heat **2 tsp sesame oil** and fry **2 thinly sliced chicken breasts** for 1-2 minutes until browned. Add **4 thinly sliced shallots**, **250g shredded sprouts**, **1 finely diced garlic clove** and **½ tsp chilli flakes**. Stir fry for 3-5 minutes until tender and the chicken is cooked through. Stir through **zest of 1 lemon** and **1 tbsp soy sauce**.

All recipes and image courtesy of **www.loveyourgreens.co.uk**

Feature Laura Higgins

This month we love...

The new Korean Yogiyo sauces, now available from Sainsbury's. Gochu Jang is a spicy cooking paste suitable for Korean fried chicken, while the Galbi sauce is also great with beef and pork. Finish off your dishes with the Gochu Jang dipping sauce for a sweet and spicy kick of chilli. Each sauce is priced at £2.20.

If you do one thing this month...

You might think molecular gastronomy is best left to the likes of Heston, but with flavour pearls you can add bursts of flavour without the need for your science kit. The tiny gossamer-thin juice-filled spheres will add something extra to your dishes or cocktails. Flavour Pearls from Sous Chef are available in 13 flavours, including fig and yuzu, priced from £5.95 for 50g. Or try Strawberry Popaball, £2.95 for 125g, available from Lakeland.

Try me...

Gin has undergone somewhat of a resurgence recently, with gin-drinkers increasingly looking for unique flavours. Glendalough Distillery's Wild Botanical Gin is created each season with foraged botanicals, berries and fruit from the Wicklow countryside, and with no more than 3,000 bottles produced each season you are sure to have something your friends won't. Available from www.thewhiskyexchange.com priced from £39.45.

Eat me...

This year Waitrose has developed a signature blend of spices, including nutmeg, cinnamon, cardamom, black pepper and tangerine, which has been used across 30 food, drink and homeware products. Look out for the Signature Spice products, including a spiced ham, a chocolate collection and mincemeat, as well as the spice blend itself to add to your own dishes and bakes.

Buy me...

Brush up on your dessert-making skills with Sweet, the latest book from James Martin, £20, published by Quadrille. Whether you want to bake a simple pudding for after Sunday lunch, or something much more lavish and impressive, there are over 70 recipes to choose from, as well as easy-to-follow steps on how to perfect the basics.

CHECK OUT WWW.YOURHOMEMAGAZINE.CO.UK/FOOD FOR MORE TASTY RECIPES

Festive feast

These recipes are perfect for entertaining over Christmas, whether it's for the lead up, or on the big day itself…

PREPARATION TIME 5 MINUTES
MAKES 1

Belsazar Negroni

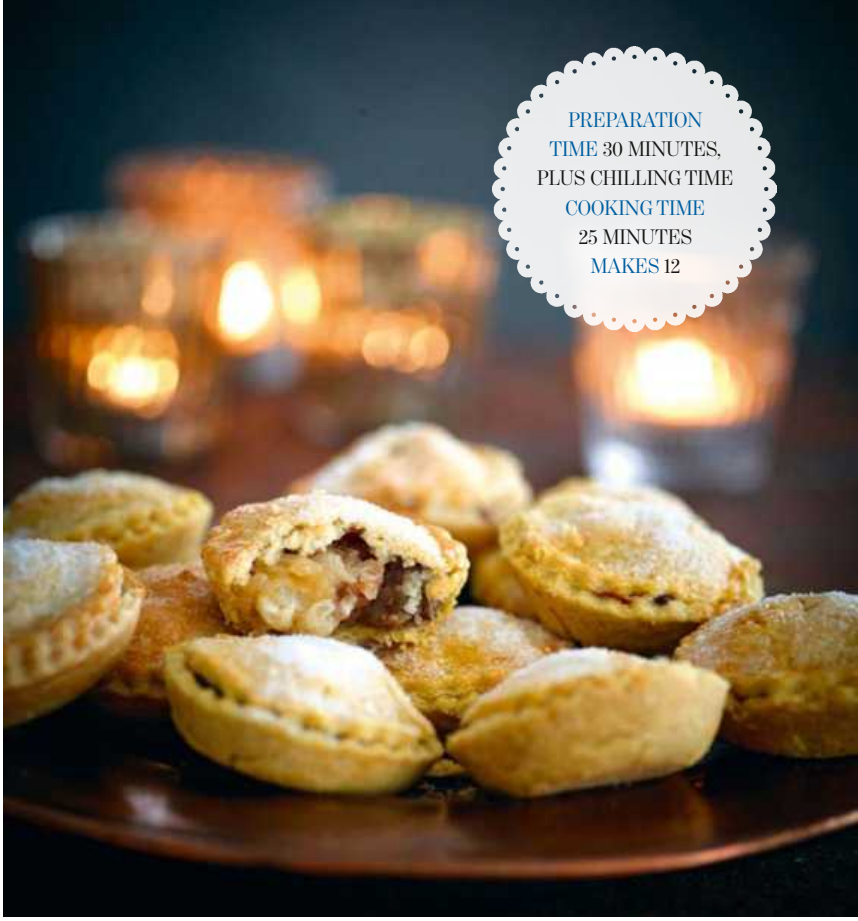
YOU WILL NEED

✔30ml Belsazar Red ✔30ml Tanqueray No.Ten gin ✔30ml Campari ✔orange zest, to garnish

DIRECTIONS

■ Pour the Belsazar, then Tanqueray into an old-fashioned glass. Add the Campari and garnish with orange zest.

Recipe courtesy of Belsazar



PREPARATION TIME 30 MINUTES, PLUS CHILLING TIME
COOKING TIME 25 MINUTES
MAKES 12

Mini spiced apple, pecan & Comté pies

YOU WILL NEED

✔200g plain flour ✔pinch of sea salt ✔115g unsalted butter, room temperature and cubed ✔1 egg, separated ✔250g Bramley apples ✔½ tsp ground cinnamon ✔40g pecan halves, roughly chopped ✔50g Comté cheese, cut into 1cm cubes ✔caster sugar, to sprinkle

DIRECTIONS

■ To make the pastry, mix the flour and salt together in a bowl. Rub in the butter with your fingertips until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs.

■ Mix the egg yolk with 2 tablespoons of ice cold water and sprinkle three quarters of this over the flour and butter mix. Mix to a firm dough using a cutlery knife and then one hand – you may need to add more liquid, but the pastry should not be too damp. Wrap the pastry in cling film and chill in the fridge for 30 minutes.

■ To make the filling, peel, core and cut the apples into 1cm cubes. Put them in a saucepan with the cinnamon and 2 tablespoons of water and cook gently over a low heat for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the apples are soft.

■ After the pastry has chilled, heat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6.

■ Lightly beat the egg white with a fork. Cut off a third of the pastry and keep it wrapped in cling film while you roll out the rest to the thickness of a 20 pence piece. Using a cutter a little bigger than the holes of a shallow bun tin (about 7cm), cut out circles and line each hole.

■ Roll the remaining third to the same thickness and, using a smaller cutter (about 5cm), cut out circles for the lids of each pie.

■ When the apple filling is cool, stir in the pecans and cheese. Spoon the filling into the pastry-lined holes, brush a little water around the pastry rims and lay the pastry lids over the filling, pressing the edges together to seal.

■ Make a little hole in each lid for the steam to escape. (If you want to freeze the pies, this is the time to do it and then defrost them completely before proceeding to the next stage.) Brush the tops with the egg white and sprinkle with a little sugar.

■ Bake for about 25 minutes, until deep golden brown, then remove and let them sit for 5 minutes in the tin before very gently moving them onto a wire rack or onto a plate to serve.

Recipe courtesy of www.comtecheese.co.uk

Roast rib of Scotch beef with cranberry, port and roasted garlic glaze

YOU WILL NEED

✔600g-1kg lean boned and rolled Scotch Beef sirloin joint ✔3 red onions, halved ✔8-10 garlic cloves ✔1 tbsp oil ✔150ml port ✔4 tbsp cranberry sauce ✔ 300ml stock ✔1-2 tsp gravy granules

DIRECTIONS

■ Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4. Calculate the cooking time using the following timings: rare - 20 minutes per 450g plus 20 minutes; medium - 25 minutes per 450g plus 25 minutes; well done - 30 minutes per 450g plus 30 minutes.

■ Place the Scotch beef onto a rack in a roasting tin and open roast in the oven for the calculated cooking time. At 50-60 minutes before the end of the cooking time, add the onions and garlic cloves to the roasting tin, or in a separate tray and drizzle with the oil. After 30 minutes remove the garlic cloves.

■ In a saucepan, place the port and cranberry sauce. Squeeze the roasted garlic cloves out of their skins and add to the saucepan.

■ Heat for 5 minutes until the cranberry sauce has melted. 20 minutes before the end of the cooking time glaze the joint with a couple of spoonfuls of the glaze.

■ Repeat during the last 10 minutes. When the joint is cooked, remove from the roasting tin and add the stock to the pan, stirring to remove any crispy bits.

■ Add to the saucepan with any remaining glaze, bring to the boil and add the gravy granules, heat for 1-2 minutes until thickened, then serve.

Recipe courtesy of Quality Meat Scotland

PREPARATION TIME 15 MINUTES
COOKING TIME SEE DIRECTIONS
SERVES 6

Buttered sprouts with bacon and walnut

YOU WILL NEED

✔600g Brussels sprouts ✔4 rashers streaky bacon, chopped ✔25g walnuts, coarsely chopped ✔25g butter

DIRECTIONS

- Place the sprouts in a pan of salted, boiling water; cook for 5 minutes then drain.
- Heat a large frying pan; fry the bacon until crisp then add the walnuts and fry for 1 minute.
- Add the sprouts and the butter and cook, stirring often, until lightly browned.

Recipe courtesy of Lakeland

PREPARATION TIME 10 MINUTES
COOKING TIME 10 MINUTES
SERVES 4-6

Maple roasted potatoes

YOU WILL NEED

✔1kg pink fir apple potatoes, washed
✔60ml duck fat ✔30ml pure maple syrup
✔3 sprigs of thyme or fresh rosemary

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4. Line a baking tray with foil.
- Combine all of the ingredients and season with salt and pepper. Arrange on baking tray and roast for about 1 hour 15 minutes, turning frequently.

Recipe courtesy of Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers, www.welovemaple.co.uk

PREPARATION TIME 5 MINUTES
COOKING TIME 1 HOUR 15 MINUTES
SERVES 6-8

PREPARATION TIME 20 MINUTES, PLUS CHILLING TIME
SERVES 12-14

Chocolate and chestnut terrine

YOU WILL NEED

✔250g dark chocolate, roughly chopped, such as Willie's Cacao Peruvian Chulucanas 70 ✔40g unsalted butter ✔450g unsweetened chestnut purée ✔100g unrefined icing sugar ✔2 tbsp cognac ✔1 tsp vanilla essence ✔100ml double cream ✔whipped cream, to serve ✔raisins soaked in cognac or rum, to serve

DIRECTIONS

- Lightly grease a 18cm x 10cm loaf tin and line with baking paper.
- Melt the chocolate with the butter in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of gently simmering water, making sure the bottom of the bowl is not in contact with the water. Set aside.
- Beat the chestnut purée, icing sugar, cognac and vanilla essence together in a large bowl until well blended and smooth. Beat in the melted chocolate and butter until well combined. Add the cream and continue beating until evenly mixed through.
- Spoon the mixture into the prepared tin and smooth the surface. Place in the fridge to chill for 2-3 hours, or until firmed up.
- Turn the terrine out onto a serving plate. Slice thinly and serve topped with whipped cream, and a scattering of raisins soaked in cognac or rum.

Recipe courtesy of Willie's Cacao

Festive food

FOR EVERY OCCASION

Before hitting the shops, take a look at our favourite buys for keeping Christmas simple…

For getting the party started

Feature Laura Higgins

▲ **An eye-catching centrepiece for the table, filled with toffee, chocolate, pecan and caramel**

Taste the Difference pecan and caramel bundt cake, £12 for 800g, Sainsbury's

◀ **Martini with hints of dried fruit, citrus peel, cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves**

Mince Pie martini, £12 for 50cl, M&S

Crispy beer batter, lightly seasoned chips and a pea purée

Extra Special beer battered fish & chips DIY kit, £4, Asda

▶ **Shake and serve cocktails in a matter of minutes with ready-made mixers**

Funkin Daiquiri cocktail mixer, £2.99 for 250ml, www.funkincocktails.co.uk

▶ **Roast pork balls with an apple sauce and crunchy pieces of pork crackling**

Roast pork lollipops with apple sauce and crackling dip, £3.50 for 242g, Sainsbury's

For a cosy Christmas Eve

▼ Classic mince pies updated, with the addition of blackcurrants and crème de cassis

Taste the Difference mulled cassis mince pies, £2.50 for 200g, Sainsbury's

▶ Mix with white wine for a fiery kick; add a drop of whisky, or simply serve warmed through for drivers

Spiced Ginger punch, £3 for 75cl, **Belvoir**

▼ Dessert flavoured sweets, including spiced berry parfait, pomegranate panna cotta and Christmas pudding

Butlers Christmas Dessert collection, £6, Waitrose, Selfridges and www.butlerschocolates.com

▲ Salmon tarts with cream, Cheddar, white wine, brandy, fennel, tarragon and Dijon – simply pop in the oven

Taste the Difference Scottish salmon & scallop tartlets, £3.75 for four, Sainsbury's

For a festive start

◀ Maple syrup-infused salmon, smoked over maple and beechwood chips

Extra Special maple smoked salmon, £2.80, Asda

▶ Start the celebrations early with a glass of fizz

Clementine & cassis bucks fizz, £5 for 70cl, M&S

▲ Buttery brioche with dark chocolate chunks and gold glitter crunchies

Choccotone, £2, Asda

◀ A boozy treat to perk up your morning toast or croissant

Manfood Mojito and Negroni jams, £3.95 each, Ocado

For the main event

Easy-to-carve and filled with subtle gingerbread spices

Turkey parcel with pork, gingerbread and apricot stuffing, £35 for 1.6kg, Waitrose

Enjoy with olives and nuts before dinner

Taste the Difference dry fino sherry, £8 for 50cl, Sainsbury's

Heston Blumenthal bringing unique flavours to your table

Heston from Waitrose celeriac & bread sauce; cranberry & pomegranate sauce, both £2.49 for 200g, Waitrose

Offer around these chocolate gianduja stars with coffee

Stelline di cioccolato, £11.95 for 550g, Carluccio's

Wow guests with this impressive-looking pud

Specially Selected golden topped Christmas pudding, £9.99 for 907g, Aldi

Celeriac and potato layered with double cream, garlic and Gruyère

Taste the Difference celeriac dauphinoise, £4 for 600g (available from customer ordering), Sainsbury's

For a chilled out Boxing Day

▲ **Spread on crusty bread for a festive snack**

Extra Special duck and cherry pâté, £3, Asda

▶ **The sticky bourbon and cola glaze makes this extra special**

Bourbon and cola ham joint, £8 per 700g, Morrisons

◀ **Perfect pairing for a cheeseboard**

Maritime salted caramel porter, £1.85 for 300ml, M&S

▶ **Wensleydale with sugary Cognac-soaked plums and caramel pieces – sounds odd but tastes delish!**

Taste the Difference Drunken Sugar Plum Wensleydale, £12 per kg, Sainsbury's

▶ **Gingered apple and sultana to go with cold cuts and cheese**

Hawkshead Boxing Day chutney, £3.75 for 190g, www.hawksheadrelish.com

For keeping the kids happy

Everything you need to build this tasty tower

Decorate your own doughnut Christmas tree tower, £3, Tesco

◀ **Keep kids entertained while you wrap the pressies**

Decorate your own gingerbread house, £4, Tesco

▼ **Retro flavours for kids and adults alike**

M Signature mini posh dogs, £3.50 for 10, Morrisons

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Home IMPROVEMENT

Turn the page to get the low-down on buying an unusual property

Give a multi-purpose gift

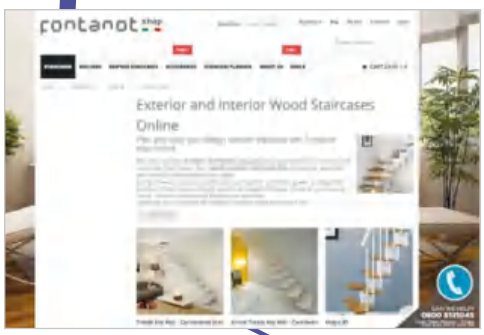
If you're struggling to think of a suitable gift for a DIY or craft project enthusiast, take a look at Dremel's range of Christmas kits. Available in three options; bronze, silver and gold, they each contain Dremel's best-selling 3000 Multitool, as well as a range of versatile and interchangeable accessories. The bronze kit includes a shaping platform attachment for excellent control during sanding and grinding, plus five useful accessories to tackle a host of cutting, shaping and sharpening jobs around the home. The silver kit includes three attachments and 55 accessories, while the gold kit has five attachments and an impressive 70 accessories, making it the ultimate tool for all sorts of projects. Prices start from just £39.99 for the bronze kit, so you might even want to buy one for yourself!

Dremel Multitool 3000 gold kit, £99.99, Dremel

Feature Lisa Hibberd

Step it up

If you're planning an extension or home renovation and will be in need of a new staircase, check out Fontanot – a website which supplies modern wooden staircase kits. There are a selection of designs to choose from to complement a contemporary interior, and most arrive in kit form, ready to be installed by a competent DIYer. The online staircase planner lets you try out different designs before you buy.



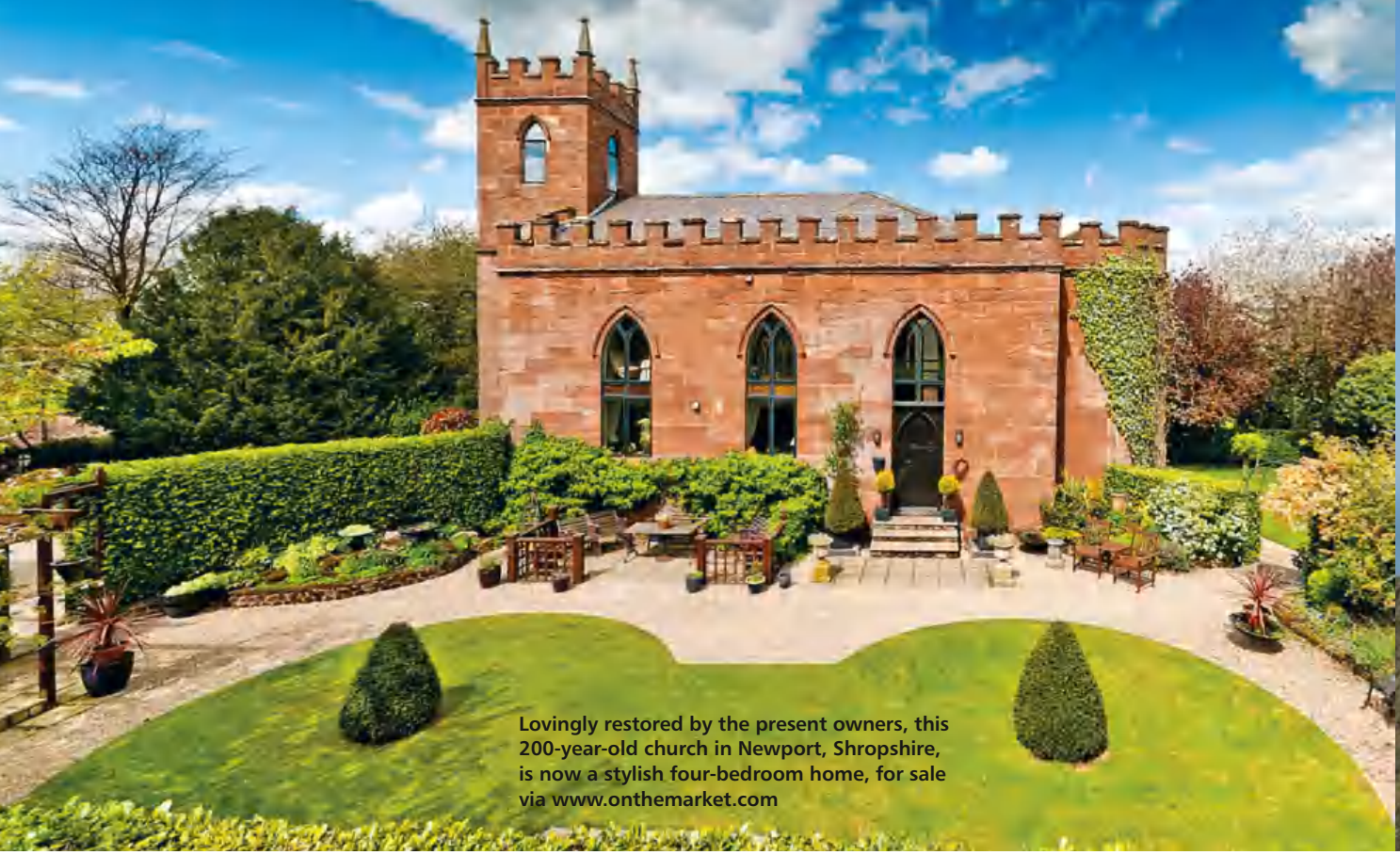
Turn up the heat

Although a log burner or fire is a real treat during the winter months, it's surprising how much wood you can get through. Hotties Heatlogs are an eco-friendly fuel which burns longer, hotter and more safely than traditional heat sources. Made from dried clean sawmill residue, they are formed without any additives, so they don't spit or spark, as well as being easy to light. Each Heatlog is a compact 20cm long and burns for up to two hours, giving off consistent levels of heat from start to finish. Prices start from £5.99 for a pack of 10, and they're also available delivered direct in pallets of 250, 500 or 1,000, from www.woodfuel-direct.co.uk.

The perfect fix

Looking for a stocking filler for the DIYer who has everything? We love this little kit from Sugru, the fun mouldable glue, which contains five mini packs of Sugru in a range of colours, packaged in a storage tin, plus a handy booklet of 'home hacks' – quick fixes and solutions for around the home. We especially love the clever ideas for creating hooks and clamps to keep cables tidy. It costs £10 and is available at Sugru.com.

FOR MORE EXPERT ADVICE AND CASE STUDIES GO TO WWW.YOURHOMEMAGAZINE.CO.UK



Lovingly restored by the present owners, this 200-year-old church in Newport, Shropshire, is now a stylish four-bedroom home, for sale via www.onthemarket.com

Consider a conversion for a truly unique home

Feature Andrea Dean

Britain's rich architectural heritage means that we have an amazing array of homes to choose from. Buyers who'd prefer to live somewhere a little out of the ordinary will find that there are plenty of unusual conversions on the market. These include chapels, castles and schools, with most boasting a wealth of interesting features. Whether you're planning a renovation project or would rather buy somewhere already converted, make sure you're fully prepared to avoid unexpected costs and complications.

Think outside the box to find a one-off, wonderful home

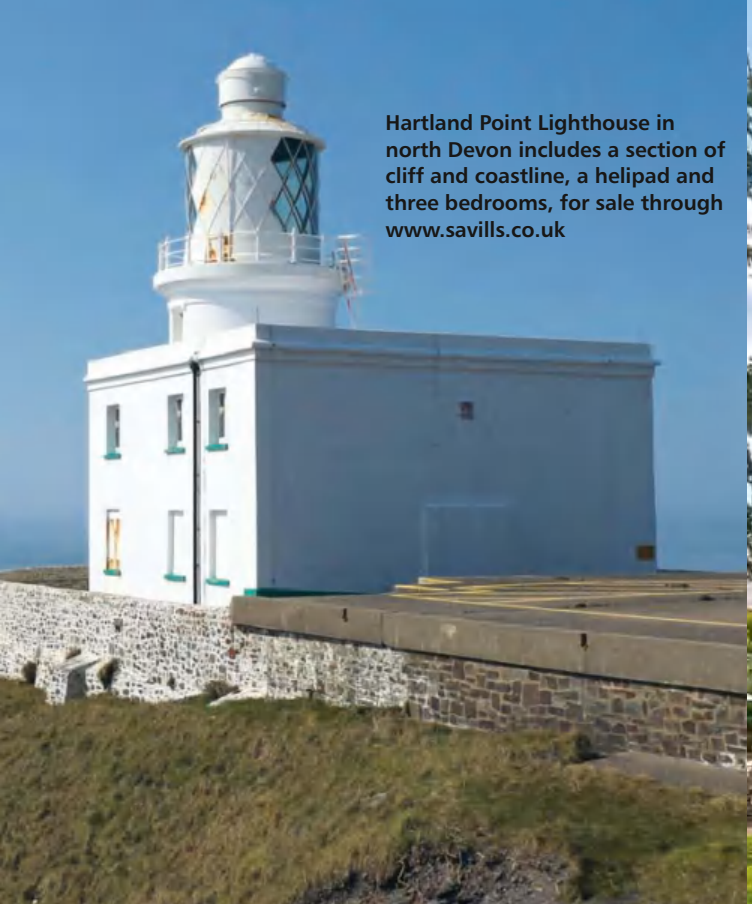
1 CHURCHES

Solidly built, full of history and endowed with a host of heavenly features such as high ceilings and interesting windows, churches and chapels make amazing homes. You'll find them the length and breadth of the country, often located in the heart of communities rather than in isolated spots. Developers queue up to get their hands on large churches which they carve up into a series of apartments – and smaller chapels are the ideal size for transforming into family homes. If you're doing it yourself, check whether the local planning department will allow you to construct internal walls as a completely open-plan layout may not suit your lifestyle.

Buying a newly-converted home in a former pub means all the hard work has been done for you, as in this three-bedroom apartment in London's Islington, through www.foxtons.co.uk

Image www.breadmorewebb.com

Easterford Mill in Kelvedon, Essex, sits in an idyllic riverside setting and retains its original wheel and engineering



Hartland Point Lighthouse in north Devon includes a section of cliff and coastline, a helipad and three bedrooms, for sale through www.savills.co.uk

Complete with three roundels, this is a prime example of a beautifully-restored Kent oast house where hops for brewing beer were once dried, www.fineandcountry.com

2 SCHOOLS

It's said that our school days are the best days of our lives, so why not relive them by moving into a school conversion? Many former educational establishments are Victorian and have out-served their purpose, as they may be too small or the buildings aren't practical for 21st-century teaching. Just like redundant churches, they are normally situated in towns and villages and range in size from small schoolhouses – which are relatively easy to convert into single dwellings – through to vast buildings in expansive grounds. The latter tend to be bought by developers and converted into luxury loft-style apartments which make the most of features such as large windows and parquet floors.

3 AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS

Such is the popularity of living in a barn, mill or oast house that it's getting increasingly difficult to find one that hasn't been converted. These homes are in peaceful, rural settings and offer an abundance of character and charm – look out for exposed beams and brickwork, kilns, millstones and other relics of the building's working past which have been incorporated into the living space. Some early conversions, dating from the 1970s and 1980s, were done cheaply and although they may need complete refurbishment, the work is less onerous than converting from scratch. You're unlikely to be allowed to enlarge existing windows or doors, but should be able to fit expanses of glazing to flood the interior with natural light.

4 OFFICES AND WAREHOUSES

Apartments in converted warehouses and factories are the epitome of industrial chic and continue to be highly sought-after by young professionals and creatives wanting a cutting-edge home in a hip, urban area. Office conversions are more affordable and have increased in numbers since mid-2013, when the government scrapped the need for planning permission when turning them into flats, for a period of three years. While some of the subsequent office conversions are uninspiring, others have produced state-of-the-art new homes in central neighbourhoods, incorporating contemporary, hi-spec fixtures and materials within flexible, bright layouts and even adding extra storeys onto existing buildings.

TURN OVER FOR MORE ADVICE ▷

This former village school house in the Wye Valley has been imaginatively converted into a five-bedroom house full of original features, for sale through www.roscoerogersandknight.co.uk

This apartment in a converted post office in Bromley gets a stamp of approval for both location and specification

Image www.alandemaid.co.uk

Homes don't get much more unusual than this converted water tower in Hertfordshire, meticulously restored and refurbished to an incredibly high standard

Image www.dreampad.com

Conversion tips

- Have a building survey carried out.
- Get an architect on board with plenty of experience of similar projects.
- Consult with local planners to find out whether you're likely to be granted permission for change of use if not already in place.
- Ensure finances are in place. You'll need a substantial deposit, and the mortgage company may release funds in stages as the build progresses.
- The work will cost more if the building's listed, as you'll be required to use specific materials.
- Allow a contingency fund of at least 20% more than projected costs.

5 ONE-OFF WONDERS

Some types of buildings are so rare that only a handful come onto the market every year. These include lighthouses, castles, stations and water towers, which may already be private homes, or crying out for conversion. It's easy to be seduced by the idea of living somewhere truly unique that sits in spectacular surroundings, but it's vital to consider the practicalities – ask yourself whether you could cope with all the stairs in a tower where every room's on a different level, or living by a live track if you buy a disused station.

Useful contacts

- **www.cityandcountry.co.uk** is a leading heritage developer that breathes new life into old buildings.
- **www.property.org.uk** specialises in out-of-the-ordinary homes for sale.
- **www.uniquepropertybulletin.co.uk** lists all categories of unusual homes on the market.
- **www.unusualhomes.co.uk** advertises unique properties, both newly-converted and in need of renovation.
- **www.zoopla.co.uk** allows you to search for any type of property in a given location.

6 NEW FOR OLD

A newly-converted apartment or house within a historic building will give you the convenience of contemporary living in a home that's been sympathetically designed to reflect the building's past. Developer City & Country has won many awards for bringing listed buildings back to life by transforming them into exciting new living spaces. Current schemes include the King Edward VII estate in Midhurst, West Sussex, where a former sanatorium is being renovated and converted into 162 homes, and The General, a scheme of over 200 new and converted apartments and houses in the old Bristol General Hospital.

▼With its double-height living room, exposed beams, and terrace overlooking the river, this three-storey converted warehouse in Newcastle ticks a lot of boxes, and is available through www.sandersonyoung.co.uk

Believed to be Scotland's smallest castle, 17th-century Bath Castle in Fife is now a two-bedroom home. At £199,000, it costs less than a tiny London flat, through www.ckdgalbraith.co.uk

CASE STUDY

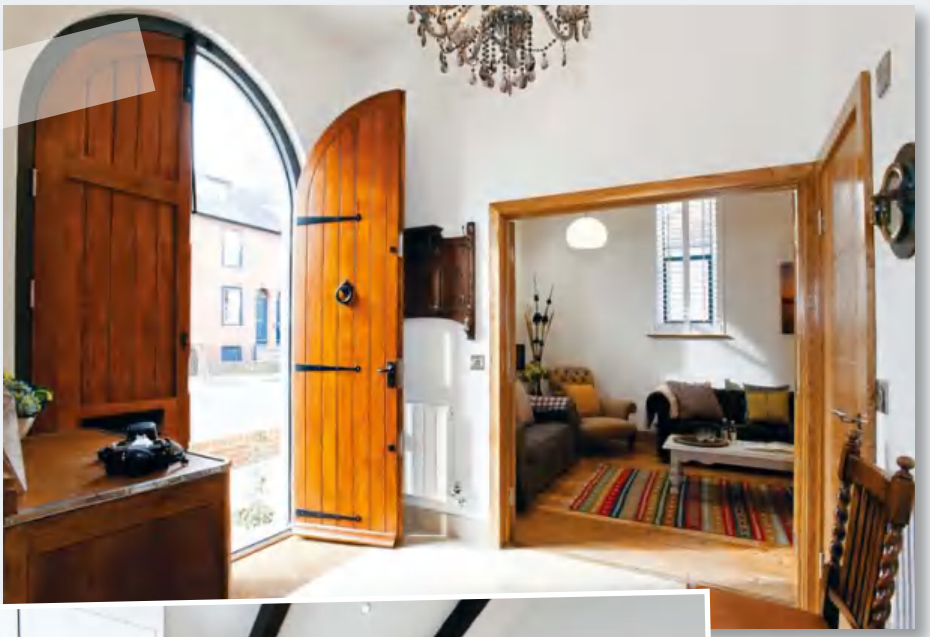
'Restoring an old chapel breathed new life into the area'

▲ Along with her husband and three sons, Deborah took a hands-on approach to the chapel conversion

Virtually derelict and having stood empty for more than a decade, the 19th-century Methodist chapel Deborah and Noel Kavanagh bought in 2009 was both unloved and unwanted. 'Our initial plan for the property was to turn it into a restaurant with living accommodation above,' Deborah explains. 'However, after spending months on research and negotiating a string of hurdles with the local planning department, we came to the conclusion that it wasn't a viable option.'

Having secured permission for change of use into a home, and with an experienced architect on board, their plans for the conversion were eventually approved. Once everything had been stripped out, and original materials saved wherever possible, it took eight months for the empty shell to be turned into a contemporary three-bedroom home. 'We had to switch builders half way through and take on the project management ourselves,' says Deborah. 'At one stage, Noel and our three sons were all helping out to speed things along.' She even has a photo of one of the boys painting the cross on the roof.

▲ Built in 1850, the old Methodist chapel had stood empty for ten years before the Kavanagh family stepped in and restored it to its former glory



▲ The original arched chapel doors open to the stone floored hallway and the spacious living room beyond

◀ Dark stained oak beams highlight the vaulted ceiling in the bedroom

Deborah was responsible for the design of the interior, choosing materials and fittings which suited the style of the building and recycling original features such as the bricks, oversized doors and pine floorboards. 'Replacing the rusty Crittal windows was the biggest headache as they had to be specially made and we wanted them grey while the planning department said they should be white,' she says. 'We got our way in the end, and everyone agrees how good they look!' In fact, she and Noel believe the chapel conversion has had a positive effect on the surrounding area, as several neighbours are now giving their own properties a facelift. 'Our friends all thought we were mad to buy a derelict chapel, but it was definitely worth all the hard work,' she smiles.

Noel and Deborah have chosen to rent out The Nave in Lymington, Hampshire as a holiday let. Contact www.newforestliving.co.uk for details.

Feature and photos Gill Rothwell

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Property know-how with George

This month property developer, architect and presenter of Channel 4's Amazing Spaces, **George Clarke**, talks about the joys and frustrations of the planning process

Photo Lizzie Orme

The planning process drives me mad. It is inefficient, too complicated, too slow and has too much red tape. Development plans are set by the local council, there are very strict and definitive policies and design guidelines that determine what is acceptable for a new home or modifications to an existing home. You then spend lots of money on architectural fees and submissions and all it takes is for an individual planner or someone on the planning committee to say 'I don't like it' and your planning application is refused. I've been there so many times over the years and I've then had to spend even more money going to appeal to win on something that should have been granted approval in the first place.

Don't get me wrong, we absolutely need a very good and efficient planning system in order to quality control all architectural design work in the UK, but if an urban or rural development plan has been issued and approved by the local council and what you're proposing meets all design guidelines in your local area then it should be instantly approved. The entire system needs to be reformed and simplified certainly for small works done to domestic houses.

OK, this is controversial, but in my view I'm not sure you should need planning permission at all to do work in spaces that already exist in the home such as loft conversions or garage conversions. If a planning department issues clear design guidelines for what a loft conversion or garage conversion should look like in relation to a specific house type, then as long as you follow those specific guidelines then you should just be able to get on and do it. There does exist 'permitted development rights' where you can commence work without requiring full planning permission for certain works, but you still need to apply to use those development rights and I just don't think they go far enough. I live in a house at the moment that has an unused loft space. There are many loft conversions in the area so precedents have already been set and there are clear design guidelines for what a loft conversion should look like, but I still need to make a full and expensive planning application to be able to do it. And this applies to many other forms of domestic planning development.

But, as it stands you need full planning permission for the majority of changes to your home. Your 'permitted development rights' allow you to add up to a specific volume of space as a rear extension to your home or a roof dormer window, but you still need to apply for a 'certificate of lawful development' in order to be able to do the work. This generally only takes four weeks. Full planning applications to your local authority for more substantial works can take between eight and 12 weeks to be approved. If your planning application is refused you have the right to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate who will independently assess the application you have made and may over rule the original planning refusal.

The main cost of making a planning application is having your existing house fully measured and drawn up by either a surveyor or architect and then paying for the scheme to be designed and proposed drawings produced. There can be a significant amount of paperwork required too depending on the type of planning application. For a recent basement planning application, which had to include everything from design statements to traffic management reports, structural reports and tree surveys, the entire cost of all professional fees came to £35,000! And that's before you even start digging a hole! But, don't worry, for minor works to a house it won't cost you anything like this figure. There is then a fee to pay to the local authority for them to process and make a decision on your application. It is better that an architect or similar professional deals with the planning application on your behalf as it can be a complicated process and if you attempt to do it yourself and it's not completed correctly then your application will be deemed invalid and returned to you.

Building Control Approval is very different to planning. Building control relates to the standards and quality of any building work being carried out at your home. So you pay a fee and make an application to either your local authority, or an independent approved inspector, who will inspect all technical aspects of the build from the structural design to electrics, plumbing and drainage. It is the officer's job to make sure that your building contractor is constructing your home in accordance with the current building regulations. This level of control is for your own peace of mind as well as being a statutory requirement.

It is so important that you have planning permission and a building control certificate for any significant works that are carried out on your home. If you don't obtain these permissions and certificates then this might be a problem if you ever put your home on the market. And if you're in any doubt about planning or building control, please don't commence any works without contacting your local council. Good luck!

■ **For more tips and advice from George, check out his website at www.georgeclarke.com**

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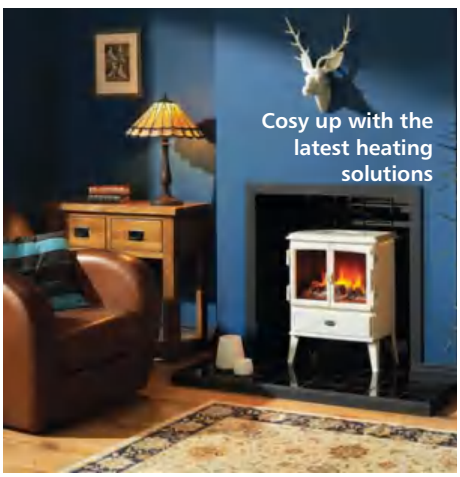

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We have £6,364 worth of fab prizes up for grabs!

Win a Roku streaming player

Roku is offering eight lucky *Your Home* readers a Roku streaming player, worth £99.99.

The Roku streaming player transforms any TV into a Smart TV, allowing you to stream your favourite films and TV programmes on channels such as Netflix, Google Play, Sky Store, BBC iPlayer, ITV Player and NOW TV. Plus, with no less than 1,500 streaming channels available on Roku, there's something for all tastes and interests. The Roku 3 also comes with a remote control, which doubles up as a motion control for gaming and includes a headphone jack for private listening.

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8 lucky winners

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3 fantastic prizes

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Win a Heat Holders prize bundle

Do you feel the cold throughout the winter even when you're snuggled on the sofa at home? We're giving away a Snuggle Ups blanket, Snug Over jumpers and slipper socks for him and her, all worth over £85, to keep nine lucky readers warm this winter.

Heat Holders Snug Over is a versatile jumper that can be worn both indoors and outdoors and Snuggle Ups blankets are a luxuriously soft fur fleece with an official tog rating of 1.4, perfect for those chilly evenings. To complete the warming bundle, you'll get two pairs of non-slip slipper socks which have an incredible 2.34 tog rating.

Heat Holders products are available to buy at www.heatholders.co.uk and various high street retailers.

9 great prizes

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Win a Beldray electric fire

Now that winter is here, Beldray is offering three lucky *Your Home* readers the chance to win a Porto LED Electric Wall Fire, worth £299.99. With its black glass fascia, the Wall Fire will add some contemporary style to your home. The three LED fuel bed effects and sidelight colours give you the option to mix it up to suit your mood too. The fire is fan assisted, meaning cold air is drawn from the room via a powerful electric fan which then heats the air before it's returned to the room, creating a warm and cosy atmosphere. You'll also get a handy remote to give you total control, all from the comfort of your sofa. For more information and to check out the full range visit www.beldray.com.

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WIN! ✶ WIN! ✶ WIN! ✶ WIN! ✶ WIN! ✶

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10 amazing prizes

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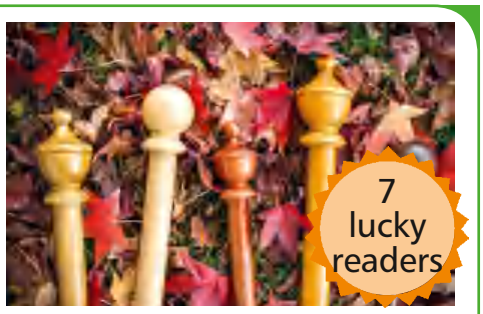

7 lucky readers

Celebrating the beauty and warmth of real wood finishes, window decoration expert, Swish, has added the brand new Naturals collection of semi-gloss, wooden curtain poles to its ever expanding range.

Your Home has teamed up with Swish to offer seven lucky readers the chance to win one of these striking 35mm pole sets, worth up to £119.99.

Visit www.swish.co.uk or call 01543 272600 to find out more.

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Terms and Conditions
1. The prize comprises 7 x Naturals wooden pole set from Swish with either ball or urn finials. 2. Winners can choose one Naturals pole set in one of the following widths: 150cm, 180cm, 240cm, 300cm, 360cm.

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Win a Bosch pressure washer

12 great prizes

Bosch's high pressure washers are the perfect solution for tackling tasks around the home and garden – cleaning everything from the car to patio furniture. The Bosch AQT 33-11 high pressure washer, RRP £64.99, is lightweight and compact, yet still provides all the oomph you'll need to get the job done. Requiring minimal set-up, it has quick-connect fittings, enabling effortless cleaning and incredible results.

Your Home has teamed up with Bosch to give 12 lucky readers one of these fantastic high pressure washers. To find out more visit www.bosch-garden.com.

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To enter: Phone or text your name and address for the prize you would like to win or enter online at www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk. Phone and text entries must reach us by midnight on 31st December 2015, and three working days later for online entries. *Calls cost 30p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge and last approx. 2 minutes. Calls from mobiles may vary. **Texts cost 50p plus your standard network charge. This is not a subscription service. Lines close at midnight on 31st December 2015 and three working days later for online entries. Winners will be selected at random from all correct entries received after the closing date. If you call to enter after the advertised closing date you will not be entered into the competition, but you may still be charged. **RULES:** 1) Hubert Burda Media UK may use your details to let you know about other products and services we think may be of interest to you. If you do not want offers from us, please end your text message with BURDA NO. 2) The competition is open to anyone in the UK over the age of 18, apart from employees of Hubert Burda Media UK, Spoke and any other companies involved in the competition. 3) Unless otherwise stated prizes include delivery to the UK mainland but not installation or removal of existing appliances or products. 4) No cash alternative is available and products will not be changed or upgraded, but should the prize become unavailable Your Home has the right to offer an alternative prize. 5) Only one online entry per giveaway per person. 6) Winners must be willing to participate in publicity if required. 7) Proof of postage is not proof of receipt. 8) The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. 9) Unless otherwise stated prizes must be claimed within six months. 10) Holidays and breaks are subject to availability at the time of booking and unless otherwise stated do not include travel, insurance or extras. 11) Reproduction of this competition in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Hubert Burda Media UK reserves the right to prosecute any offending parties. 12) Allow 8 -10 weeks from selection for completion. 13) Entrants are asked to provide their full name and address when entering the competition. SP: Spoke – 0333 202 3390.

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Eco news

Discover this month's green buys and advice

Marrakesh Christmas decoration, £14.95, Dassie

Deck the halls

Step away from the metres of tinsel and pick up some stylish, eco-friendly decorations instead. If you haven't heard of Dassie before then you're missing out on a large collection of on-trend homewares that are ethically sourced, and its Christmas decorations are no exception. This set of four hanging decorations, including a Christmas tree, heart, angel and a star, are handmade by talented artisans, and because Dassie works directly with the makers, you can rest assured that they're being paid a fair wage.

In the bag

As of 5th October 2015, it's now the law that retailers with 250 or more full-time employees must charge at least 5p for every new, single-use carrier bag they give out to customers. It's hoped that the new charges will encourage us all to reuse carrier bags we already have or at least buy less carrier bags at the check out and, in turn, that this will have a positive effect on the environment. Do your bit by keeping a few carrier bags in the boot of your car or treat yourself to a stylish cotton tote bag to keep in your handbag for those spur-of-the-moment trips to the shops.

ECO kitchen-to-table range, from £29.95, www.ashortwalk.com

Chop, chop!

If you haven't yet sent off your letter to Santa, you might want to add these chopping boards to the list. Ashortwalk specialise in developing stylish and functional products from recycled materials and these boards are actually made from recycled paper. Not only do they look great but they're also incredibly durable and come with a lifetime guarantee. The range includes carving, chopping and bread boards as well as multi-use utility plates, plus, they can even be personalised if you're thinking they'd make a good gift for someone.

Eco expert

James Lee from MyGlazing.com, tells *Your Home* about the importance of energy-efficient windows

'Research from the Glass and Glazing Federation estimates around 24% of a home's energy can be lost through inefficient windows. MyGlazing.com, the new website from the GGF, can help you make an informed decision when it comes to choosing the right windows, doors and conservatories. Double or single glazing which is more than 15 years old is not as energy-efficient as modern glazing, which is kinder on the environment as it can reduce carbon emissions while helping lower your energy bills. Work out how much you could save with MyGlazing.com's energy saving calculator.'

Image istock

WEBSITE WATCH... www.edenspaper.com

Wrapping paper will make your presents look pretty but it's no secret that it creates a lot of waste. Eden's Paper is biodegradable wrapping paper that contains layers of plant or vegetable seeds, so once you've unwrapped your gifts, plant the paper straight into soil, water it and grow crops such as broccoli, tomatoes and chillies. You can buy Eden's Paper from www.mr-fothergills.co.uk.

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